

# Open Research Online

---

The Open University's repository of research publications  
and other research outputs

## Multiculture, Community and Social Inclusion in New City Spaces

### Thesis

#### How to cite:

Kesten, Jamie (2012). Multiculture, Community and Social Inclusion in New City Spaces. PhD thesis The Open University.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2012 The Author

Version: Version of Record

---

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

---

[oro.open.ac.uk](http://oro.open.ac.uk)

# **Multiculture, community and social inclusion in new city spaces**

**Jamie Kesten**

**Bachelor of Arts in American Studies**

**Master of Science in Ethnicity and Multiculturalism**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Human Geography**

**30 September 2011**

DATE OF SUBMISSION = 29 SEPTEMBER 2011  
DATE OF AWARD = 5 JANUARY 2012

ProQuest Number: 13837584

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 13837584

Published by ProQuest LLC (2019). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

This thesis was supervised by:

**Professor Allan Cochrane**

Department of Social Policy and Criminology

The Open University

Internal Supervisor

**Professor Giles Mohan**

Department of Development Policy and Practice

The Open University

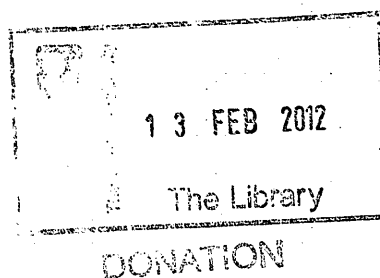
Internal Supervisor

**Dr Sarah Neal**

Department of Social Policy and Criminology

The Open University

Internal Supervisor





# Abstract

---

This thesis is interested in understanding the new migration patterns and changing geographies of multicultural taking place in the UK outside of the larger established cities and towns by investigating Milton Keynes (MK) as a new multicultural city space. Using a case study of MK's Ghanaian and Somali communities it explores how BME communities establish themselves as part of the wider local community and examines the ways in which local policy-makers and practitioners have responded to an increasingly multicultural and ethnically diverse population. The research focuses upon local sites of community construction such as schools, provision for young people and religious centres, reflecting, among other things, the particular formal and informal roles played by these sites.

The thesis finds that people within MK are not living the 'parallel lives' crisis of the community cohesion discourse, but rather 'living apart' at times and also 'living together' at others, reinforcing the significance of place-based understandings in the context of new multicultural geographies. The research found that young people of Ghanaian and Somali origin often reflected positively on the sense of community present within MK's residential areas and demonstrated processes of negotiation and of both 'mixing' and 'non-mixing' within certain distinct social and geographic contexts. It also found that, in seeking to manage the emergent multicultural population, policy-makers and practitioners generally rely on identifying community organisations (and their leaders) with whom they can liaise. In doing so they may overlook the significant diversity of experiences which exist within

the Ghanaian and Somali communities (and the extent to which these are subject to change) and are therefore less likely to deliver appropriate resources and interventions. The research findings indicated that how people themselves manage multiculturalism is much more fluid and able to be negotiated than cohesion discourses and formal policy makers imagine and assume.

**This thesis is dedicated to my daughter Jasmine**

# Acknowledgements

---

First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisors Professor Allan Cochrane, Professor Giles Mohan and Dr Sarah Neal for the invaluable support, guidance and patience they provided me, both as a student and as a person. Having the benefit of their collective insight and expertise has been an incredibly rewarding experience for me and words could never fully express my gratitude.

My parents, Meg and Tony Kesten, have provided me with never-ending support during the best and worst of times; I hope I can return the favour some-day.

I am very grateful to Milton Keynes Council for part-funding and supporting my research. I owe a great deal to all of those from the Council who have offered assistance with my research including individuals from the MKi Observatory and members of the Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Support Service for responding to all of my requests for the latest statistics and datasets, as well as all my research participants from the Council and other local third sector organisations, schools and from the Ghanaian and Somali communities who sacrificed their time to be involved in this research.

There are many other people without whom this studentship would have been much more difficult. I would like to thank Sheree Barboteau and Jan Smith from the OU Geography Department for all of their help, pointers and chats throughout the studentship. I would also like to thank Fleur LeCroisette and Sue Searle for all of their timely IT Support, as well as Su Prior and everyone at the OU Research School.

Finally, there were several people who provided friendly ears (and shoulders) at various points throughout the studentship and who were a source of strength at much needed times, from the Open University; Clare Lademan and my fellow students Berry Cochrane, Andrew Fordham, Nadia Bartolini, Johanna Wadsley and Kim Hagen, and from outside the Open University; Hayley Hopkins, Greta Langdale and Charlene Seaton. My sincerest thanks to you all.

**This thesis was undertaken as part of an ESRC CASE studentship, in partnership with Milton Keynes Council:**

**ESRC Reference No. ES/F033311/1.**

# Contents

---

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>List of Acronyms.....</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1    Recognising new multicultural city spaces.....	1
1.2    The Research Questions.....	8
1.3    Why Milton Keynes? .....	12
1.4    The project background .....	18
1.5    Thesis Structure.....	20
<b>2. Race, place and the new multicultural city space(s) .....</b>	<b>29</b>
2.1    Introduction.....	29
2.2    Theories of multicultural, community and social capital.....	30
Multicultural theory.....	31
Community .....	34
Social capital .....	37
How they all fit together.....	40
2.3    More than just a 'new setting' .....	41

2.4	Place-based studies of race relations in the UK .....	43
2.5	Issues, policies and identity: a shift away from place .....	53
2.6	Meaningful interaction or insurmountable segregation? .....	57
2.7	Conclusion .....	66
<b>3</b>	<b>..... Policy approaches to race, multicultural and community: A case of history repeating? .....</b>	<b>70</b>
3.1	Introduction.....	70
3.2	Early assimilationist approaches .....	74
3.3	Multicultural policy-making .....	77
3.4	Returning to assimilation? Community cohesion, citizenship and social integration.....	87
3.5	Preventing Violent Extremism while maintaining cohesion .....	103
3.6	Conclusion .....	109
<b>4</b>	<b>Reflections on Method and Methodology .....</b>	<b>112</b>
4.1	Introduction.....	112
4.2	Research design.....	112
	Document Analysis .....	120
	Semi-structured interviews .....	121
	Participant observation .....	123
	Focus groups .....	125
4.3	Doing the research .....	128

	Policy-makers, practitioners and youth workers.....	132
	Voluntary sector .....	134
	Migrant groups, organisations and (religious) leaders.....	135
	Educationalists.....	146
	Ethical considerations.....	149
	Analysing the results.....	152
4.4	Research reflections and key insights .....	153
	Between two worlds: Being a CASE Student .....	153
	Researching multicultural in new city spaces.....	162
	Researching as a 'local' .....	167
4.5	Conclusion .....	169
<b>5.</b>	<b>Local multicultural policy-making in new city spaces .....</b>	<b>171</b>
5.1	Introduction.....	171
5.2	Multicultural policy making in Milton Keynes: limited history to extensive architecture .....	172
5.3	Neglecting race and multicultural? The focus of local policy upon community and cohesion agendas.....	185
5.4	Emerging disparities between policy and practice around issues of multicultural.....	192
	Policy concepts: different interpretations.....	193
	Preventing Violent Extremism: a contradiction.....	200



Schools and EMAS: 'Old' policy formations .....	202
5.5    Managing multicultural: community engagement and consultation in new city spaces .....	205
5.6    Conclusion .....	213
<b>6. Community and processes of migratory settlement in new city spaces.....</b>	<b>215</b>
6.1    Introduction.....	215
6.2    A community of communities? Acknowledging the complexity of BME communities in Milton Keynes.....	217
Ghanaian and Somali communities in Milton Keynes: complex, fractured and cohesive .....	218
Faith and religious centres within communities: a bonding role .....	228
New voices? Acknowledging generational differences within communities .....	235
6.3    'Making-up' communities: the co-construction of groups by community leaders and local policy- makers .....	237
6.4    New city urban landscapes and social cohesion .....	247
The local public transport network: contributing to social division? ...	251
Local community facilities: a bridging role? .....	255
Young people in Milton Keynes: forms of interaction beyond the ethnic lens? .....	258
6.5    Convivial interactions and ambivalent relations in new city spaces.....	262

6.6	Conclusion .....	266
<b>7.</b>	<b>Conclusions .....</b>	<b>269</b>
7.1	Introduction.....	269
7.2	The role of place in community and race and ethnic relations.....	271
7.3	Multicultural policy-making and community engagement practices .....	277
7.4	Community formation: ‘everyday’ interactions and ‘living together, apart’ .. .....	283
7.5	Researching multicultural in new city spaces .....	286
7.6	Conclusion .....	289
<b>Appendix A: Interview Participants.....</b>		<b>291</b>
<b>Appendix B: Focus Group Participants .....</b>		<b>295</b>
<b>Appendix C: Focus Group Guide.....</b>		<b>299</b>
<b>Appendix D: Interview Guide .....</b>		<b>301</b>
<b>Appendix E: Interview and Focus Group Participant Information Sheets .....</b>		<b>304</b>
<b>Appendix F: Participant Consent Form .....</b>		<b>307</b>
<b>Appendix G: Interim Report to Milton Keynes Council .....</b>		<b>309</b>
<b>Appendix H: Research Presentation Event.....</b>		<b>329</b>
<b>Appendix I: Research Presentation Event Feedback Forms .....</b>		<b>341</b>
<b>Appendix J: HPMEC Proposal .....</b>		<b>343</b>
<b>References.....</b>		<b>352</b>

# List of Figures

---

<b>Figure 1:</b> Snapshot of perceptions of cohesion in each local authority in England (COIC 2007, p. 21).....	6
<b>Figure 2:</b> Map showing the geographical position of Milton Keynes in the UK ( <a href="http://www.mkweb.co.uk">http://www.mkweb.co.uk</a> ).....	12
<b>Figure 3:</b> MK Annual School Census data 2010, EMASS.....	15
<b>Figure 4:</b> Ghanaian supporters celebrate as Ghana defeats Latvia 1-0 during an international friendly at <i>stadiummk</i> in Milton Keynes on 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2010 (MK News, <a href="http://www.mk-news.co.uk/News/Black-Stars-win-World-Cup-warm-up-at-stadiummk.htm">http://www.mk-news.co.uk/News/Black-Stars-win-World-Cup-warm-up-at-stadiummk.htm</a> ).....	16
<b>Figure 5:</b> A poster for an annual entertainment event held in Milton Keynes primarily featuring Ghanaian music, dance, games, drumming and food ( <a href="http://www.facebook.com/meetmetherekmk">http://www.facebook.com/meetmetherekmk</a> ).....	16
<b>Figure 6:</b> MKLSP Member Organisations (MKLSP 2008).....	177
<b>Figure 7:</b> MKLSP Thematic Strategic Partnerships (MKLSP 2008).....	178
<b>Figure 8:</b> Flow diagram demonstrating the responsibilities and relationships of the Community Belonging Thematic Partnership. ....	180
<b>Figure 9:</b> Map of Milton Keynes showing grid-road system ( <a href="http://www.open.ac.uk">http://www.open.ac.uk</a> ).....	248

# List of Acronyms

---

AGMK	Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes
AMMA	Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CCCS	Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies
CMEB	Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain
CIC	Community Interest Company
COIC	Commission on Integration and Cohesion
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EMASS	Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Support Service
MK	Milton Keynes
MKC	Milton Keynes Council
MKCoF	Milton Keynes Council of Faiths
MKCVO	Milton Keynes Council for Voluntary Organisations

<b>MKEC</b>	<b>Milton Keynes Equality Council</b>
<b>MKLSP</b>	<b>Milton Keynes Local Strategic Partnership</b>
<b>MKMA</b>	<b>Milton Keynes Muslim Association</b>
<b>ODPM</b>	<b>Office of the Deputy Prime Minister</b>
<b>ONS</b>	<b>Office for National Statistics</b>
<b>PCT</b>	<b>Primary Care Trust</b>
<b>PVE</b>	<b>Preventing Violent Extremism</b>
<b>TVP</b>	<b>Thames Valley Police</b>

# 1. Introduction

---

## 1.1 Recognising new multicultural city spaces

This thesis sets out to study Milton Keynes as a new multicultural city space. It explores the experiences of two of the migrant communities that have settled in Milton Keynes in the last decade. Alongside this the research focuses on the ways in which local policy-makers and practitioners have responded, in a policy context of community cohesion, to the challenges and opportunities presented by what are the newly multicultural residents in Milton Keynes. It sets out to do so by investigating the ways in which these culturally diverse communities become established in the city. Drawing on the experience of two recently settled but distinct Black African migrant populations – Ghanaians and Somalis – it examines the different and similar experiences of these migrant groups as they have become an established part of Milton Keynes' urban population.

The thesis is also interested in the policy making processes which accompany the establishment of such multiculturally constituted communities, as well as the relationship between local multicultural policy making and local community formation. The research focuses particularly on the ways in which schools and youth service provision and religious centres are part of local community-making processes and how these relate to, involve, or exclude the Ghanaian and Somali communities in Milton Keynes. This focus reflects a number of factors: the age profiles of the two migrant groups; the concerns over both young people and religion in community

cohesion agendas and the particular formal and informal roles that schools and religious centres play.

Until recently the majority of academic research looking at race, ethnicity and multiculturalism has taken place in the UK's large established cities and towns, and often those areas of cities that are especially associated with urban decline. For example, Birmingham (Rex and Moore 1967; Rex and Tomlinson 1979; Solomos and Back 1995), Bristol (Pryce 1979) Liverpool (Ben-Tovim 1988) and London (Back 1996) have all been sites of research into ethnic relations since the 1950s. The urban unrest in small towns in northern England in 2001 also called forth some significant academic responses (see for example, Kundnani 2001; Amin 2002, 2003; Jahn-Kahn 2003; Phillips 2006) but, like the inner cities, these areas are typically characterised by high levels of unemployment, poor housing stock and deep rooted residential segregation.

The fact that three of the five pieces of landmark research adopting a place-based focus that are assessed within Chapter Two of this study are set within the context of Birmingham is not insignificant and warrants attention here. Clearly, judging from the work of Solomos and Back (1995) and the sheer volume of studies based there, the nature of Birmingham as a large urban area experiencing successive waves of immigration and settlement during this period offered researchers an intriguing context through which to seek an understanding of the emerging form of diversity in the UK.

While this focus on traditional areas of settlement was warranted at the time of the studies, since then changing geographies of multiculturalism within the UK have

encouraged the emergence of work concerned with the presence of multiculturalism, or at any rate increased ethnic mixing, in less familiar places. So, while Birmingham continues to embody this trend and is on pace to become one of the first 'plural cities' (Herbert 2007) in the UK (where the white population becomes a 'minority ethnic group') there are new emerging contexts of ethnic diversity within the UK which are yet to experience significant academic review, with the exceptions of Wrench et al (1993) providing a very early insight into the 'New Towns' of South East England and Sarre et al (1989) on housing in Bedford as well as Neal (2002), Chakraborti and Garland (2004) Ray and Reed (2005) and Neal and Agyeman (2006) on issues of ethnicity and the countryside. Attention has also been drawn (in an echo of the conclusions drawn by Sarre et al 1989) to the problems of housing policy in a small town in England (Reeve and Robinson 2007). Also, work focused on Leicester has recently begun to open up some of the tensions, possibilities and limitations of prosaic encounter (Clayton 2009).

Yet there remains a need for more consistent empirical work on the nature of ethnic and community relations in ('ordinary' or 'unexceptional') cities (see Amin and Graham 1997) which are relatively prosperous, and have a much shorter (but increasingly significant) history of multicultural settlement. It is therefore, arguably, a sound first step to make a case for place-based understandings of race, while always acknowledging that the places studied must accurately and comprehensively represent the dynamics of the times. While Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool and other major post-industrial towns and cities were of particular interest to researchers in the 1960s, '70s and '80s, this research contends that the study of new multicultural



city spaces is necessary to progress our understanding of contemporary race and community relations within the UK today.

Under New Labour central government initiatives seeking to challenge social exclusion were increasingly linked to community capacity building and had an emphasis on cultural integration and social cohesion. However, generally the emphases of these were on responses to neighbourhood decline. Milton Keynes presents a different case as the challenge is to develop forms of inclusive growth at the same time as meeting the needs of existing (albeit continuously forming and reshaping) communities. The concern of this thesis is to examine what happens in a different urban setting that is expanding economically and newly multicultural.

New migration patterns over recent decades incorporate migrants from a far greater variety of countries, cultures, religions and ethnicities. These new patterns have played a key role in the major shifts and changes in the UK's population, characterised by Vertovec (2007, p. 1024) as 'super-diversity', 'distinguished by a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants who have arrived over the last decade'. This super-diversity features a more varied set of trajectories, including, for example, migrants arriving directly from their home nation as well as those arriving after onward migration from other locations, via various means and after varying lengths of time – sometimes after second and third generations of settlement. The drivers for these movements include the expansion of the European Union and the freedom of movement which this involved, temporary and skilled worker schemes,

long-term economic migration from a wider range of countries as well as the search for asylum and refuge from war or persecution. At the same time as migration configurations have shifted globally so too internal patterns of migration have made it increasingly common for black and minority ethnic (BME) and migrant populations to locate themselves outside the UK's larger towns and cities, in what can be identified as new multicultural urban spaces, such as Milton Keynes. This new geography of ethnic diversity means that the old maps which connected multicultural populations exclusively to inner city areas and the post-industrial Pennine towns no longer offer accurate accounts of multi-ethnic and migrant settlement. The experience of some form of multicultural encounter is one that is widely shared by those living in most of the UK's cities, large and small. While data from the 2001 Census points to the concentration of the non-white population of the UK within large urban centres – nearly half (45 per cent) lived in the London region in 2001, where they comprised 29 per cent of all residents, with 78 per cent of all Black Africans in the UK living in London – this is now significantly dated and it is anticipated that the 2010 Census will demonstrate the more evenly distributed nature of contemporary British multiculturalism (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=457>). The Commission on Integration and Cohesion (COIC) found a positive picture nation-wide with public perceptions of levels of cohesion being good in most areas. Figure 1 below shows that, on average, 79 per cent of people agreed that people of different backgrounds got on well in their local areas and this level of agreement fell below 60 per cent in only ten out of 387 local areas (COIC 2007, p. 21).

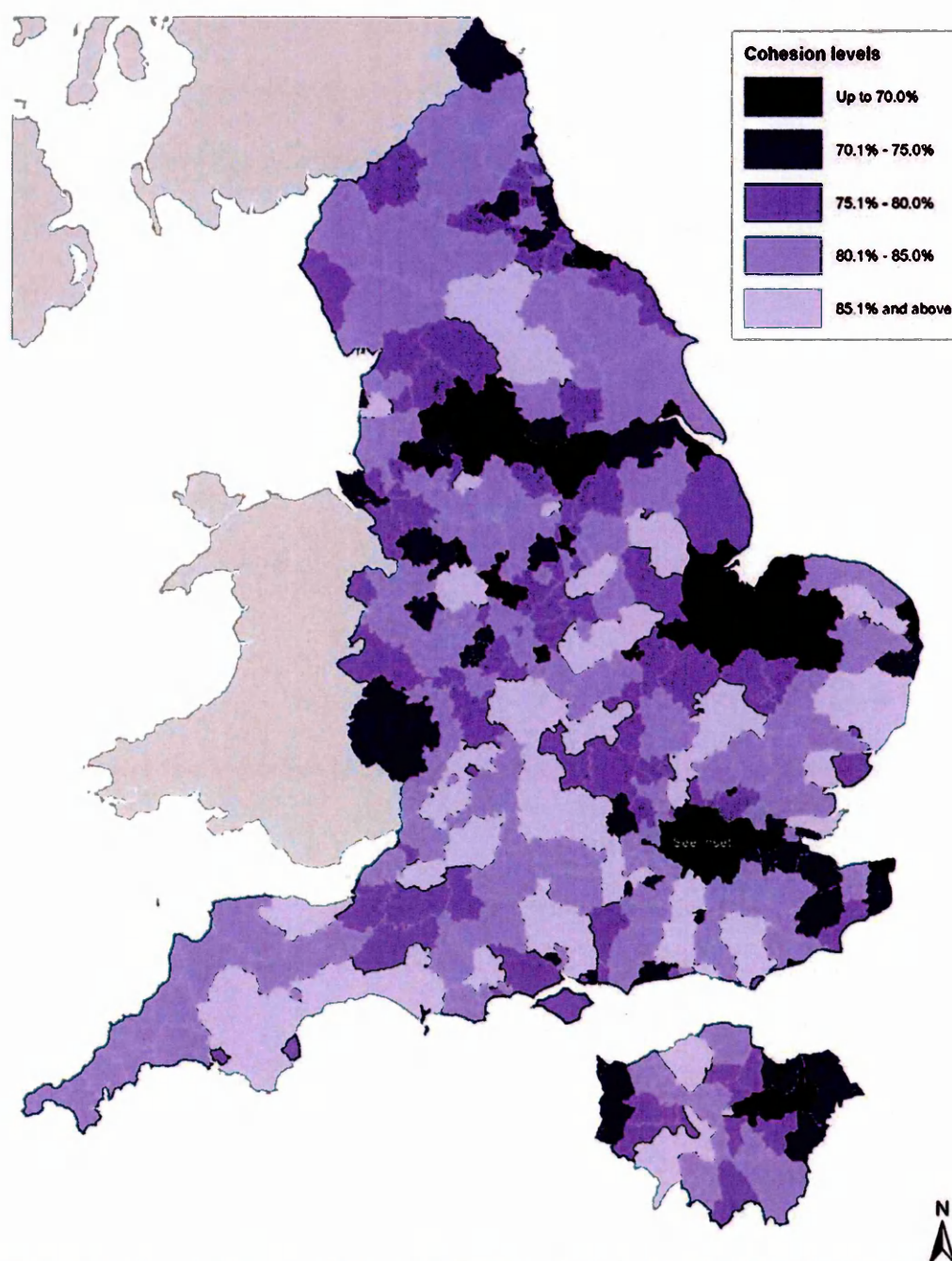


Figure 1: Snapshot of perceptions of cohesion in each local authority in England (COIC 2007, p. 21).

This thesis makes the case for research into issues of ethnic diversity, community relations and processes of social inclusion within new geographies in order to more accurately reflect and understand the changing dynamics of ethnicity in the UK. It emphasises the importance of developing a rounded understanding of changing

contemporary geographies and policy spaces of multicultural and of acknowledging the valuable insights into community formations and policy-making practices that these spaces can offer –locally and on the wider national scale. Relying solely upon understandings based upon research located within large urban areas overlooks the key developments in contemporary multicultural within the UK. Focusing on ‘new spaces of multicultural’ signals recognition of the shift away from ethnically homogenous spaces to increasingly multi-ethnic ones. This does not necessarily mean that the lived experience is so very different for racialised minorities – but it is likely to be constructed in different ways. As Nina Glick Schiller and Ayse Çağlar remind us: ‘No matter how similar cities are in terms of overall scalar positioning, their complex layers of social history and social structure result in specific local forms of incorporation built on place-specific representations, legacies and expectations’ (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2009, p. 196).

The significance of these arguments for the research discussed in this thesis is twofold. First, it directs attention towards the local – the micro-geographies of interaction allowing for the exploration of relationship building (however uneasily) across cultural difference and through practices in particular places, rather than starting from expectations associated with the identification of pre-existing (socially and spatially bounded) communities, as has typically been the case within the community cohesion agenda (see Cantle 2001).

The ESRC CASE partnership with Milton Keynes Council (MKC) which funded my studentship and this research (discussed below) has ensured that local and national policy approaches to issues of multicultural, community cohesion and social

inclusion have been a key focus of this project from the outset. Notions of commonality, shared values, attachment and feelings of belonging and community are relied upon heavily within policy discourse, particularly within the cohesion agenda. These approaches are analysed in greater detail within the context of wider public policy approaches to issues of race, community and multicultural in the UK more broadly in Chapter Three as well as in Chapter Five reflecting on empirical findings relating to local multicultural policy-making in new city spaces.

Second, implicitly at least, this thesis directs attention to the ordinary and to the small scale interactions and processes which make up community. It aims to take this further by considering the experience of an urban space which, despite a history of promotional boosterism, might, according to Barker (2009), be seen as quintessentially ordinary – a ‘suburban place par excellence’.

## **1.2 The Research Questions**

The project was organised around five research questions which reflected the concerns identified above. The questions are underpinned by the three broad aims: exploring the new geographies of multicultural within the UK; identifying and understanding processes of community formation and settlement within the UK’s new multicultural cities; and highlighting the approaches to multicultural policy making taken by local authorities within these new spaces, as well as considering the extent to which there is a relationship between these local community-making and policy-making practices.

The questions were as follows:

1. What challenges and opportunities do more recently constituted multicultural city populations present to local government and formal and informal community structures?
2. How are social capital and formal and informal capacity within two migrant communities mobilised as a means of developing a sense of belonging to and being part of MK and its communities?
3. How do particular loci work to create 'community-ness' (with a particular focus on the role of schools and religious centres in facilitating – or restricting – multicultural exchange and community well-being)?
4. How do local government and organisations draw on and incorporate migrant communities' social capital in policy strategies to enable active participation in MK's local communities?
5. What are the opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of multicultural, community cohesion and social inclusion initiatives within MK and how might this research serve as a case study exemplar for policy interventions in other localities which have both long and short multicultural histories?

Implicitly at least, all of the five research questions deal with the first of the three research aims noted above of recognising the changes which have taken place to contemporary multiculturalism within the UK, as they acknowledge the ways in which these new migrants and new geographies emerge, become established and are responded to at the local level. By reflecting upon existing literature and previous studies upon issues of race and ethnic relations from more traditional contexts later in Chapter Two, and upon empirical findings on local policy-making and policy

interventions within Chapter Five and the nature of community making and interactions in Chapter Six, it is possible to begin to understand how the experiences of new city spaces may differ from traditional contexts and why it is important that these new contexts are researched and understood in greater detail.

Tackling the second aim of pinpointing the ways in which migrant communities settle and are formed within Milton Keynes raises questions around community capacity and social capital. Research Questions Two and Three both focus upon the bonds and social connections which exist within Milton Keynes' Ghanaian and Somali migrant populations. Research Question Two explores the extent to which the 'bonding' activities that take place within the Ghanaian and Somali migrant populations are combined with 'bridging' activities that involve engaging and becoming involved with those outside of these.

Research Question Three develops this interest in informal resource and capacity by exploring how and in what ways individuals, groups and organisations from different cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds participate in meaningful social interaction and/or dialogue with each other in their daily lives. A particular focus is placed upon the part played by schools and religious centres in facilitating – or restricting – multicultural exchange and community well-being since these were anticipated to be two important sites of community construction and regular 'everyday' contact between those from different backgrounds. Using empirical findings from semi-structured interviews with both religious and community group leaders as well as focus groups with young people from each population the project is simultaneously aware of, and interested in, the extent to which activities which

could be described as either 'bonding' or 'bridging' may in fact be part of more fluid and nuanced processes of identity formation than is acknowledged in approaches that implicitly start from the assumption of pre-existing communities.

The project's focus on multicultural policy-making processes in a local context and the relationship between these processes and migrant communities with which they are concerned is addressed via Research Questions One, Four and Five. By paying attention to the ways in which local government and organisations draw on and incorporate the social capital of migrant communities into policy strategies within Research Question Four, and by acknowledging the challenges and opportunities presented by more recently constituted multicultural city populations within Research Question One, the aim is to shed light on the ways that policy is developed within newly multicultural city spaces and decipher the extent to which it is possible (and beneficial) to build on the social bonds and connections which exist within Milton Keynes' communities. Research Question Five attempts to look up from Milton Keynes and think through the ways in which migrant stories, perspectives and experiences of Milton Keynes and the constraints, tensions, contradictions as well as achievements of policy-makers and practitioners can be understood as local and shaped by the specific history, geography, economy and identity of Milton Keynes. It is also concerned with exploring the extent to which these are part of a bigger picture of changing multicultural and migrant settlement patterns.



### 1.3 Why Milton Keynes?

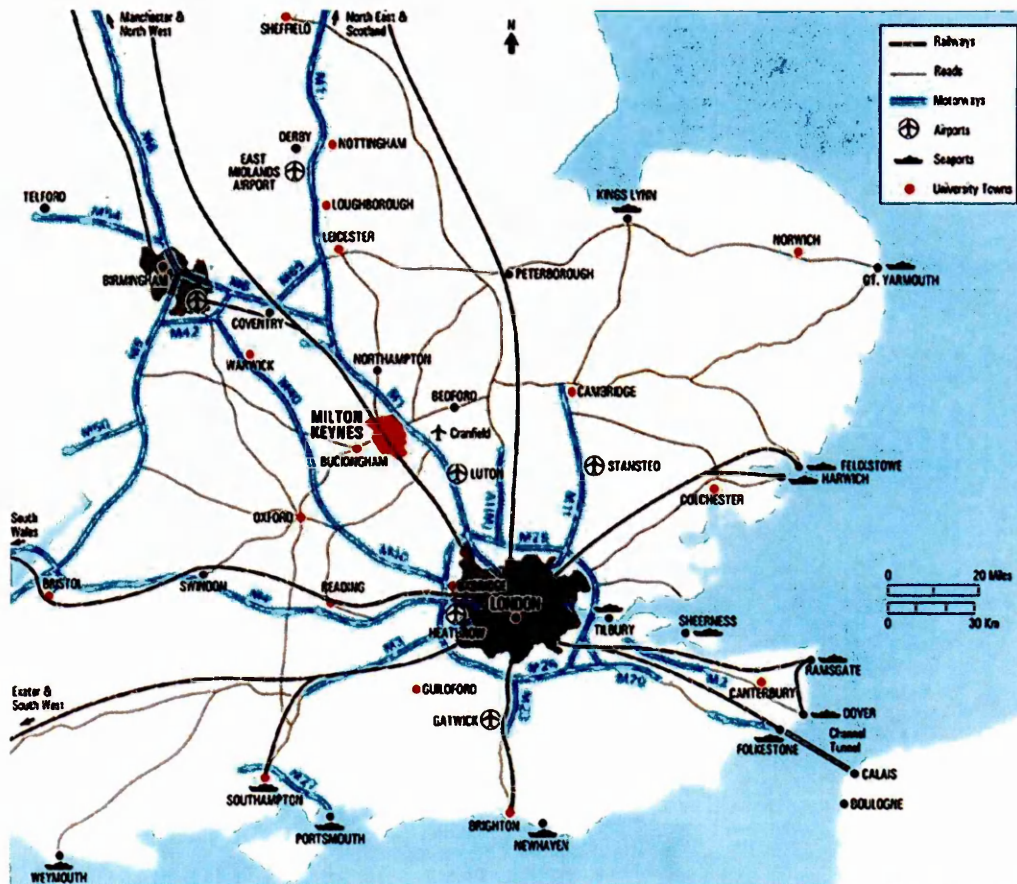


Figure 2: Map showing the geographical position of Milton Keynes in the UK (<http://www.mkweb.co.uk>).

Milton Keynes is a prosperous and rapidly expanding settlement on the edge of the South East of England that is attracting migration from across the UK as well as beyond. It was selected as the site for this research into multicultural, community and social inclusion in new city spaces for three main reasons.

First, Milton Keynes is one of the most well-known and successful examples of the UK's New Towns. Milton Keynes was designated over 40 years ago as part of a programme aimed at encouraging the deconcentration of population away from the country's biggest cities (particularly London), providing family housing and greenfield

sites suitable for development by businesses. As demonstrated by Figure 2 it is almost equidistant between London and Birmingham, although its face is resolutely directed towards the former, to which a high proportion of its working population commutes every day. Milton Keynes has a population of over 200,000, and has grown rapidly since the early 1980s, through a continuing process of in-migration. It has recently been identified as having one of the fastest growing economies in England based around private sector job growth as well as having the fastest annual percentage growth in population between 1998-2008 (Webber and Swinney 2010, p. 8). It was at the centre of one of the 'growth areas' identified in New Labour's *Sustainable Communities Plan* (ODPM 2003) and is likely to continue to grow even as the plan itself is wound down.

Second, the constantly growing and changing nature of Milton Keynes has made it a place of arrival for many, including migrant and minority ethnic groups. Today its diverse and fluid population profile includes notably high and rising rates of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. Like the other New Towns of the South East which initially drew their population from the resettlement of skilled workers from London, Milton Keynes was at first ethnically homogeneous, still being identifiable as a distinct part of the 'White ROSE' (Rest of the South East – i.e. the South East outside London) in the 1990s (see, e.g., Allen et al 1998). By the early years of the next century that had already changed to the extent that, following the 2001 Census, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) concluded that Milton Keynes was '... a remarkably average place. Almost every ethnic group is represented at a level very close to the average for England as a whole' (quoted in Cochrane 2008, p. 6).

Since 2001 the pace of change has accelerated to the extent that the conclusion of the CRE no longer rings true today. In 2003 people identified as 'Black African' (the Census category applied to Ghanaian and Somali migrants, the chosen research groups for this project) made up 1.3 per cent of the total population, the second largest BME category in the city (having risen from 0.3 per cent in 1991) and above the national average at the time of 0.95 per cent (MKC 2003). More recent estimates from 2007 indicated that this population category had continued to grow significantly (constituting 2.7 per cent of the population) and as a proportion of the overall population of Milton Keynes it remained around twice the national average for England of 1.4 per cent (ONS 2007). This growth can be evidenced yet further using Milton Keynes Annual School Census data. In 2003 18.6 per cent of school pupils were identified as having BME backgrounds. In 2004 this figure had risen to 19 per cent and by 2005 it was up to 20.7 per cent. The 2011 school census found that 32.8 per cent of students came from BME backgrounds with a still higher proportion in primary education (35.1 per cent) (MKC 2011). Even in the sixth forms 29.4 per cent of students fell into this category. The 'Black African' group represents the largest minority ethnic group, accounting for 8.6 per cent of all pupils in Milton Keynes – up from 7.8 per cent just a year earlier in 2010 – as illustrated below by Figure 3. It is these changing demographics that make the city such an appropriate focus for the research being pursued in this project.

Ethnic Group	2010	
	Pupils	%
White British	26,109	66.3
White Irish	161	0.4
White Other	1,680	4.3
Mixed	2,134	5.4
Indian	979	2.5
Pakistani	1,044	2.6
Bangladeshi	587	1.5
Any Other Asian	854	2.2
Black African	3,089	7.8
Black Caribbean	353	0.9
Black Other	576	1.5
Chinese	276	0.7
Any Other Group	493	1.3
Refuse/Unknown	1,067	2.7
<b>Total Pupils</b>	<b>39,402</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 3: MK Annual School Census data 2010, EMASS.

The Ghanaian community in Milton Keynes is relatively affluent and established, not least because it has largely been built around the migration of professionals from London over the last two decades. Many still have links to London based community activities. Giving some indication of the size of the Ghanaian community in the city and the role that Milton Keynes plays for this community the city is itself becoming the site of some larger-scale events drawing in the wider Ghanaian community in the UK as demonstrated by Figure 4 and Figure 5 below.





Figure 4: Ghanaian supporters celebrate as Ghana defeats Latvia 1-0 during an international friendly at stadiummk in Milton Keynes on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2010 (MK News, <http://www.mk-news.co.uk/News/Black-Stars-win-World-Cup-warm-up-at-stadiummk.htm>).



Figure 5: A poster for an annual entertainment event held in Milton Keynes primarily featuring Ghanaian music, dance, games, drumming and food (<http://www.facebook.com/meetmetherekmk>).

Ghanaians are not concentrated in any particular areas of Milton Keynes, but they remain well-connected to each other through a range of formal and informal associations, even if they are not incorporated into formal governance networks in the city (see Henry and Mohan 2003, Mohan 2006). The Somali population by contrast was noted to have arrived more recently, many of its members having come as refugees (see Sporton, Valentine and Nielsen 2006; Sporton and Valentine 2007 for further detail of Somali asylum seeker and refugee experiences in the UK). Although arriving in the city by a range of routes, for many Milton Keynes is their first point of settlement in the UK. The Somali population is more concentrated in the central social housing estates of Milton Keynes (Fishermead and Conniburrow), and is less well-organised, although a Milton Keynes Somali Community Council does exist. Somalis have also frequently been the subject of direct racial antagonism, reflected, for example in claims made about their access to social housing (see, for example, Milton Keynes Citizen 2007a) despite problems of homelessness faced by many (Milton Keynes Citizen 2007b).

Third, Milton Keynes provides the research with an appropriate site for case study research because it offers the opportunity to develop an understanding of both community-making and policy-making practices within new city spaces. This new population profile presents both opportunities and challenges for Milton Keynes Council in their successful management of the city. The Council explicitly acknowledges the increasing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of its communities and actively attempts to address this dynamic via a variety of community development and community cohesion based policy strategies. Since its

inception Milton Keynes has faced the challenge of generating the sense of a cohesive community with a distinct identity, even in the face of popular scepticism (see, e.g., Charlesworth and Cochrane 1997, Clapson 2004). And more recently, the local political vision has been summed up (in the *Milton Keynes Community Strategy*) as being 'to create a city that has soul, energy and dynamism' and which 'celebrates diversity' (MKLSP 2008). These efforts to establish and consolidate a multicultural identity also recognise the increasing socio-economic diversity of the city. There are concentrations of BME populations on particular estates in the city which also score highly on deprivation indices. Data from the 2001 Census shows the 'Black or Black British' population reaching nearly 10 per cent in Central Milton Keynes and over 5 per cent in Conniburrow and Fishermead (MKi Observatory, Dataset: MK: Settlements – Ethnic Groups (KS06), 2001). In recognising and attempting to address issues of multicultural, community and social inclusion the local authority are effectively endorsing the interests of this project in new urban spaces and providing it with an abundance of rich data derived from analysis of local policy documents and observations of policy-making and community-making practices.

## **1.4 The project background**

The project was established as an ESRC CASE Studentship in partnership with Milton Keynes Council which meant that there was an expectation from the very early stages that the project would offer tangible outcomes for interested policy-makers and practitioners as well as academic audiences. In addition to the academic focus required by the process of completing a PhD and the support and guidance offered by the academic institution, the CASE partnership involved an on-going placement

within the organisation and, consequently a greater degree of exposure to the various stages and mechanisms of the local policy-making process. It brought the possibility of detailed observation of the ways in which the local authority developed and implemented policy in relation to its multiculturally constituted communities. This involvement and engagement is reflected in the empirical findings of the thesis, particularly in Chapter Five on local multicultural policy-making as well as in Chapter Four on the project's methodology. There has been an emphasis throughout the project upon researching and satisfying both academic and policy interests and on encouraging a better dialogue and exchange between the two, in line with the ESRC principles of 'knowledge transfer' and 'knowledge exchange'.

The partnership with Milton Keynes Council itself is also significant. It reflects the argument of this thesis as a whole, since Milton Keynes Council was itself involved in the process of learning about the practice of multicultural policy-making and was engaged in the project as part of that process. The interest in and support for this project and the commitment of significant resources (staff time as well as financial) by a range of Milton Keynes Council officers, from ground-level practitioners up to more senior decision makers, demonstrates a recognition among the local authority that a better understanding of issues of multiculturalism, community and social inclusion is both relevant and necessary to ensuring that the city (and its population) continues to develop positively and avoids the dangers of entrenched segregation and divisions.

In addition to the role played by the local authority the project also acknowledges the important part played by the networks of other external agencies,



bodies and institutions in policy and community making processes. In order to illuminate policy making agendas on multicultural and community building, a series of semi structured interviews were conducted with individuals from agencies and institutions throughout Milton Keynes such as the MKCVO (Milton Keynes Council for Voluntary Organisations), MKEC (Milton Keynes Equality Council, formerly Milton Keynes Racial Equality Council), youth workers, community development workers and educationalists such as EMASS (Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Support Service) which contribute to this process. Alongside these, interviews were conducted with key figures in institutions at the heart of local communities such as head teachers, ethnic minority achievement support staff, religious leaders and key figures in social organisations at the centre of specific migrant populations (Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes, the Horn of Africa Welfare Association). In order to excavate notions of attachment, belonging and inclusion a series of focus groups were conducted with young people from the case study groups. The semi-structured interviews and focus groups were complemented by 'moments' of participant observation at key Council, local and migratory formal and informal community events, which yielded particular insights into 'structures of community feeling' and the extent to which inclusionary practices were present in everyday formal and informal settings. The methodology that underpinned the research is discussed more fully in Chapter Four.

## **1.5 Thesis Structure**

This thesis is organised into seven chapters as follows; this introduction (**Chapter One**) which sets out the rationale and key details of the research, a review of key

Ghanaians are not concentrated in any particular areas of Milton Keynes, but they remain well-connected to each other through a range of formal and informal associations, even if they are not incorporated into formal governance networks in the city (see Henry and Mohan 2003, Mohan 2006). The Somali population by contrast was noted to have arrived more recently, many of its members having come as refugees (see Sporton, Valentine and Nielsen 2006; Sporton and Valentine 2007 for further detail of Somali asylum seeker and refugee experiences in the UK). Although arriving in the city by a range of routes, for many Milton Keynes is their first point of settlement in the UK. The Somali population is more concentrated in the central social housing estates of Milton Keynes (Fishermead and Conniburrow), and is less well-organised, although a Milton Keynes Somali Community Council does exist. Somalis have also frequently been the subject of direct racial antagonism, reflected, for example in claims made about their access to social housing (see, for example, Milton Keynes Citizen 2007a) despite problems of homelessness faced by many (Milton Keynes Citizen 2007b).

Third, Milton Keynes provides the research with an appropriate site for case study research because it offers the opportunity to develop an understanding of both community-making and policy-making practices within new city spaces. This new population profile presents both opportunities and challenges for Milton Keynes Council in their successful management of the city. The Council explicitly acknowledges the increasing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of its communities and actively attempts to address this dynamic via a variety of community development and community cohesion based policy strategies. Since its

inception Milton Keynes has faced the challenge of generating the sense of a cohesive community with a distinct identity, even in the face of popular scepticism (see, e.g., Charlesworth and Cochrane 1997, Clapson 2004). And more recently, the local political vision has been summed up (in the *Milton Keynes Community Strategy*) as being 'to create a city that has soul, energy and dynamism' and which 'celebrates diversity' (MKLSP 2008). These efforts to establish and consolidate a multicultural identity also recognise the increasing socio-economic diversity of the city. There are concentrations of BME populations on particular estates in the city which also score highly on deprivation indices. Data from the 2001 Census shows the 'Black or Black British' population reaching nearly 10 per cent in Central Milton Keynes and over 5 per cent in Conniburrow and Fishermead (MKi Observatory, Dataset: MK: Settlements – Ethnic Groups (KS06), 2001). In recognising and attempting to address issues of multiculturalism, community and social inclusion the local authority are effectively endorsing the interests of this project in new urban spaces and providing it with an abundance of rich data derived from analysis of local policy documents and observations of policy-making and community-making practices.

## **1.4 The project background**

The project was established as an ESRC CASE Studentship in partnership with Milton Keynes Council which meant that there was an expectation from the very early stages that the project would offer tangible outcomes for interested policy-makers and practitioners as well as academic audiences. In addition to the academic focus required by the process of completing a PhD and the support and guidance offered by the academic institution, the CASE partnership involved an on-going placement

within the organisation and, consequently a greater degree of exposure to the various stages and mechanisms of the local policy-making process. It brought the possibility of detailed observation of the ways in which the local authority developed and implemented policy in relation to its multiculturally constituted communities. This involvement and engagement is reflected in the empirical findings of the thesis, particularly in Chapter Five on local multicultural policy-making as well as in Chapter Four on the project's methodology. There has been an emphasis throughout the project upon researching and satisfying both academic and policy interests and on encouraging a better dialogue and exchange between the two, in line with the ESRC principles of 'knowledge transfer' and 'knowledge exchange'.

The partnership with Milton Keynes Council itself is also significant. It reflects the argument of this thesis as a whole, since Milton Keynes Council was itself involved in the process of learning about the practice of multicultural policy-making and was engaged in the project as part of that process. The interest in and support for this project and the commitment of significant resources (staff time as well as financial) by a range of Milton Keynes Council officers, from ground-level practitioners up to more senior decision makers, demonstrates a recognition among the local authority that a better understanding of issues of multiculturalism, community and social inclusion is both relevant and necessary to ensuring that the city (and its population) continues to develop positively and avoids the dangers of entrenched segregation and divisions.

In addition to the role played by the local authority the project also acknowledges the important part played by the networks of other external agencies,

bodies and institutions in policy and community making processes. In order to illuminate policy making agendas on multicultural and community building, a series of semi structured interviews were conducted with individuals from agencies and institutions throughout Milton Keynes such as the MKCVO (Milton Keynes Council for Voluntary Organisations), MKEC (Milton Keynes Equality Council, formerly Milton Keynes Racial Equality Council), youth workers, community development workers and educationalists such as EMASS (Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Support Service) which contribute to this process. Alongside these, interviews were conducted with key figures in institutions at the heart of local communities such as head teachers, ethnic minority achievement support staff, religious leaders and key figures in social organisations at the centre of specific migrant populations (Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes, the Horn of Africa Welfare Association). In order to excavate notions of attachment, belonging and inclusion a series of focus groups were conducted with young people from the case study groups. The semi-structured interviews and focus groups were complemented by 'moments' of participant observation at key Council, local and migratory formal and informal community events, which yielded particular insights into 'structures of community feeling' and the extent to which inclusionary practices were present in everyday formal and informal settings. The methodology that underpinned the research is discussed more fully in Chapter Four.

## **1.5 Thesis Structure**

This thesis is organised into seven chapters as follows; this introduction (**Chapter One**) which sets out the rationale and key details of the research, a review of key

academic literature (**Chapter Two**), a review of public policy approaches relevant to this study (**Chapter Three**), a reflection upon the methodological approaches adopted, challenges encountered and lessons learned in conducting this research (**Chapter Four**), an outline of the empirical findings of this research relating to local multicultural policy making within new city spaces (**Chapter Five**), a consideration of the empirical findings of this research relating to community and processes of migrant settlement into new city spaces (**Chapter Six**), and finally a presentation of the substantive conclusions of the project as a whole (**Chapter Seven**).

This introductory chapter of the thesis (**Chapter One**) has established the problem that the research intended to address (the need to further develop understandings of emergent multicultural urban geographies within the United Kingdom, and the ways in which different migrant communities engage with and are engaged by local policy and governance networks) as well as the research questions around which it is organised. It now turns to outline the thesis structure which has been adopted to develop its argument and present its findings.

**Chapter Two** orientates itself in the key academic literature surrounding theories of race, ethnicity, multicultural, community, social capital and place. These are all relational and integral components of the study's intention to examine forms of community-making, Black African migrant settlement and local policy approaches to these within a particular city space. The main purpose of Chapter Two is to establish the significance of the role played by 'place' in research into issues of race, ethnic and community relations. Specifically it is argued that a renewed emphasis on the role of geography – by investigating race, ethnic and community relations within

Milton Keynes – would generate new opportunities for understanding the dynamics of multiculturally constituted communities within the contemporary United Kingdom, which now extend beyond the large urban industrial areas to include areas with relatively short histories of ethnic minority and migrant settlement.

Chapter Two looks back to early race studies conducted in the late 1960s and 1970s such as those in the Sparkbrook (Rex and Moore 1967) and Handsworth (Rex and Tomlinson 1979) wards of Birmingham and the St Paul's (Pryce 1979) ward in Bristol in order to identify how geography – and more specifically 'place' – had been used as a tool in identifying the (sometimes im)possibilities of multicultural conviviality within local community relations in the UK.

This chapter sets out to establish that – despite the importance of issue, identity and/or policy-based research (e.g. CCCS 1982; Gilroy 1987; Ben-Tovim 1988 and Solomos and Back 1995) – 'place' is more than just a blank setting or a context for social research. This thesis suggests that places, with their social, economic, cultural and geographic identities and histories very directly animate and shape local social relations, interactions and social and policy practices. The argument for a renewed focus on the importance of place-based understandings is developed here, drawing inspiration from the early place-based research examples discussed above, but seeking to set the issues within the different context of new multicultural city spaces.

The emphasis placed on the relationship between 'place' and issues of race and migrant settlement, particularly the need to consider the experiences of new multicultural spaces, led to the need to assess public policy approaches to

multiculture and community cohesion within the UK generally and also specifically within Milton Keynes in Chapter Three, in order to explore the extent to which the approaches of policy-makers and practitioners reflected or responded to the needs and experiences of the populations who were the objects of policy.

**Chapter Three** develops the policy dimensions of the research and explores the historical trajectory of public policy approaches to issues of race, community and multiculturalism within the UK in order to establish the national context for the approaches being implemented at local level in Milton Keynes.

It suggests it is possible to track a shift within policy approaches from early approaches which sought to achieve a culturally homogenous society through processes of integration and assimilation; to multiculturalist approaches which were more 'tolerant' of difference and encouraged the recognition and representation of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity; to those seeking 'community cohesion' and emphasising strong social bonds or 'cohesion' between individuals and communities and a set of shared values that all citizens would adhere to – comparable to the early assimilationist approaches. Mapping this trajectory highlights the somewhat turbulent relationship which exists within the UK between the various formulas for coping with 'difference', something which this project deals with in greater detail within the context of Milton Keynes in Chapters Five and Six.

**Chapter Four** details the research methods and design and reflects on the methodological approach taken within this research project. Researching issues of race, multiculturalism and community within a new city context like Milton Keynes offered some particular challenges related to the city's short multicultural history



and its relative inexperience – in public policy terms – in working with this increasing diversity. This chapter argues that the research experiences of studying multicultural in a newly emergent multicultural space say something about the research site and the nature of the changes in that site and the responses of those who are involved in facilitating 'good' community relations.

The chapter details the multi-method qualitative case-study approach taken by the research combining documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observation. Document analysis was conducted upon both national and local policy documents relating to issues of community and the process of managing multicultural. The chapter discusses the extent to which in many cases the policy documents were the first of their kind in the local area, highlighting the new and sometimes experimental nature of these initiatives and the steps towards their implementation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with various key agencies and individuals throughout the city including educationalists, policy-makers and practitioners and community and religious leaders and offered the research the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of participant experiences. Focus groups were conducted with several different samples of Ghanaian and Somali young people in order to develop a sense of the different views and experiences that existed amongst young people from these two populations through free-flowing and participant-led discussion. Participant observations were conducted at several local and migratory community events as well as on an on-going basis at Milton Keynes Council as a result of the ESRC CASE partnership. The insights gained from these

observations highlighted structures of community feeling and the presence of inclusionary practices within everyday formal and informal settings.

**Chapter Five** is concerned with the perspectives and experiences of communities and policy-makers within Milton Keynes who are working in the areas of community cohesion and cultural diversity. Through local policy-maker narratives it explores some of the constraints, tensions and contradictions of community-based policy-making. It reflects specifically upon the emergent contradictions between the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) and community cohesion agendas as well as on how local government attempts to use the varying social capital of migrant communities within policy strategies to enable active participation in Milton Keynes.

The key argument of this chapter is that local policy engagement practices within Milton Keynes rely heavily upon notions of strong and established community formations with 'representatives' – most often drawn from community associations and organisations – who are able to engage and lobby on behalf of their community. The rapidly changing and evolving nature of both the Ghanaian and Somali populations in Milton Keynes made community engagement practices challenging and as a result traditional (and more rigid) approaches of speaking to the leaders of community organisations were relied upon heavily. This reliance reinforced a treatment of communities as relatively fixed and left the possibility of the views of many other Ghanaians or Somalis who do not necessarily belong to those 'official' community organisations being either unheard or misrepresented – particularly within multicultural, community cohesion and social inclusion initiatives. The Chapter shows how local authority approaches to engaging with Black African migrant

communities tended to be overwhelmingly linked to the assumption of homogenous Ghanaian and Somali communities and to overlook the complexities and diversities that exist within those communities. Discussion of this is further developed in Chapter Six.

**Chapter Six** is concerned with understanding processes of community formation in Milton Keynes. It uses fieldwork data to challenge notions of fixed and unchanging communities discussed in the previous chapter. It also described how (as a result of differences in migration histories, language, culture and identity as well as faith and religious practices and generational differences) each population is made up of individuals with a highly diverse array of experiences. As such the communities to which policies refer, with whom policy-makers wish to engage, and for whom community representatives seek to represent, must be understood as forming (and not simply arriving) in that space.

This chapter expands on the notion of managing multicultural introduced in Chapter Five to suggest that significant attempts are made to 'make-up communities' as policy objects, both by individuals acting as community leaders hoping to secure funding and support and by Council officers tasked with engaging with local communities. While the local authority was seeking to engage with community leaders in order to reach their communities the community leaders were simultaneously aware that by mobilising themselves as representatives of a certain population they were able to satisfy this desire and champion the needs and interests of their organisations' members. In that sense while it is possible to identify particular communities through their lived experiences, the communities are also

generated through the policy process being defined through processes of negotiation around policy.

Despite some challenges presented by the urban landscape, the multicultural experiences in Milton Keynes can be summed up as a state of 'living apart, together'. Convivial everyday interactions take place regularly and informally, particularly among young people who commented on the ways and contexts in which they practiced mixing and non-mixing with those from different backgrounds. The chapter concludes that people in Milton Keynes are not living 'parallel lives' as community cohesion discourse sometimes assumes. Instead it is suggested that 'living apart' at times – such as during minority ethnic or migrant community events or religious worship – does not preclude 'living together' at other times, for example at school and when participating in shared interests and common activities. It is necessary to acknowledge the fluidity of individual identities rather than treating certain populations as homogenous and undifferentiated groups.

This thesis brings together a consideration of the ways in which Milton Keynes is experienced and understood by members of the Ghanaian and Somali communities (and particularly young people within these) with a discussion of the ways in which local policy has been developed to reflect the city's changing and more diverse population. After considering how young people experience the city and learn to negotiate life within a new multicultural city space, the argument explores some of the ways in which the communities mobilise themselves in Milton Keynes, recognising that this is a process rather than the expression of some pre-given cultural necessity. This leads into a discussion of the ways in which communities are

represented and represent themselves within the broad political and governance context of the city, exploring the relationship between Milton Keynes Council's search for easily identifiable 'representatives' with whom to work and the construction of representative bodies within the community. Finally, the thesis offers conclusions about the relationship between policy and the challenges of the new geographies and micro-geographies of contemporary British multicultural.

The next chapter begins the argument, as the first substantive step into this research project, by reviewing the existing literature surrounding theories of multicultural, community, social capital and the relationship between race and place within social research as the foundations upon which the rest of thesis is built.

## 2. Race, place and the new multicultural city space(s)

---

### 2.1 Introduction

Most academic work on issues of ethnicity and multiculturalism has, understandably, been undertaken in the UK's large established cities and towns, especially areas associated with urban decline, because these have traditionally been the main areas of multicultural settlement. There has been little empirical work on the nature of ethnic and community relations in cities which are relatively prosperous, and have much shorter histories of multicultural settlement. This thesis argues that the experience of such cities may be just as significant in reflecting the changing nature of the UK as a multicultural nation and developing a rounded understanding of contemporary geographies and policy spaces of multiculturalism.

This chapter serves to establish the overall argument of the thesis by arguing for the revival of 'place' as a tool in identifying the (sometimes im)possibilities of multicultural conviviality within local community relations in the UK and suggesting that such places are more representative of the ever-expanding nature of multiculturalism within the UK, from predominantly large urban centres into increasingly smaller and more suburban and provincial towns and rural areas. In order to develop this argument the chapter begins by operationalising the key terms of multiculturalism, community and social capital upon which the research questions and broader arguments of the thesis rely (Section 2.2). Having established this grounding it then moves to assess theoretical engagements with the notion of 'place' (Section 2.3),

before offering a brief history of migration and settlement patterns within the United Kingdom in order to begin to demonstrate the critical role that place-based approaches to race research in the UK have played (Section 2.4).

The second part of this chapter follows a chronological narrative, looking at the initial popularity, subsequent decline and potential revival of place-based understandings of issues of race and ethnic relations. Section 2.4 looks at a selection of place-based studies in the UK from the 1960s, '70s and '80s. Section 2.5 follows the shift in focus within the 1980s, '90s and '00s towards more issue, identity and policy-based research, demonstrating the shift away from place-based approaches during this period. Section 2.6 looks at a more recent emphasis within contemporary social research upon the possibilities of multicultural 'conviviality' and of the significance of inter-cultural interaction and dialogue (see Dwyer and Bressey 2008). The conclusion demonstrates how the emergence of everyday intercultural contact and dialogue as increasingly salient factors lend themselves easily to the argument for a detailed understanding of new urban spaces via a return to place-based approaches to race and ethnic relations research. They not only provide a context within which to study the occurrence and impact of these interactions, but also highlight the ways in which places themselves help to determine what is possible.

## **2.2 Theories of multicultural, community and social capital**

This chapter, and indeed this project, draws on the three concepts of multicultural, community and social capital in developing its broad argument and it is to a consideration of these that I now turn.

## **Multicultural theory**

'Multiculture' or 'multicultural' are the terms most commonly used in reference to contexts which contain populations from a variety of different cultural backgrounds. Drawing on such notions, 'multiculturalism' although heavily debated, is generally accepted to refer to a public policy approach of explicitly acknowledging cultural difference in the interests of promoting equality. One of the principal interests of this project is in investigating the public policy approaches to multiculturalism in the UK. It is helpful to consider the contrasting approaches of Paul Gilroy (2004a) and Tariq Modood (2007a) (see also Gilroy 1987, Gilroy 2004b; Gilroy 2005; Modood 2005; Modood 2006; Modood 2007b; Modood 2007c; Gilroy and Goldberg 2007;) because they provide a useful framing of the main theoretical debates over the best ways for societies to foster positive and successful multicultural societies, which inform the public policy approaches of interest to this study.

Gilroy (2004a, p. 108) believes the UK's inability to progress past its attachment to its imperial and colonial heritage, its 'postcolonial melancholia', represents one of the greatest (and widely unacknowledged) barriers to its functioning as an effective multicultural society. He asserts that, while recognising that there are differences between people, be they religious, ethnic or cultural, it is the need for a 'planetary humanism', i.e. the acknowledgement of the fact that 'human beings are far more alike than they are unlike', that is necessary in order to foster an open and prosperous diverse society (Gilroy 2004a, p. 4). Specifically, Gilroy argues that it is necessary to 'transform paralyzing guilt into a more productive shame that would be conducive to the building of a multicultural nationality that is



no longer phobic about the prospect of exposure to either strangers or otherness' (Gilroy 2004a, p. 108).

Modood (2007a, p. 68) has a different starting point, arguing for what he identifies as 'a pluralist, multilogical and dispersed multicultural citizenship that contains not just legal but also political, social and cultural rights for all'. He warns against discussing multiculturalism solely in terms of difference and recommends that multicultural citizenship place equal emphasis on what we have in common. For Modood:

A sense of belonging to one's country is necessary to make a success of a multicultural society. Not assimilation into an undifferentiated national identity ... An inclusive national identity is respectful of and builds upon the identities that people value and does not trample upon them. Simultaneously respecting difference and inculcating Britishness is not a naïve hope but something that is happening ... (Modood 2007a, p. 150).

Modood (2007a, p. 148) acknowledges that many invocations of national identity have involved forms of ideological nationalism which have led to 'exclusion, racism, military aggression, empires and much else'. However, unlike Gilroy (2004a), he is optimistic about the possibility of disconnecting national identities from strong forms of nationalism. He states that the logics of the national and the multicultural are not only compatible but necessary as part of his approach to multicultural citizenship which respects and values difference but also champions commonality.

In keeping with the vision of Modood (2007a), Parekh (2000a, p. 340) imagines a dialogically constituted multicultural society which sees itself both as 'a community of citizens' and 'a community of communities' where the rights, liberties and values of both individuals and communities are recognised and respected. He identifies three central insights into multiculturalism as a perspective on human life. First, that it is important to acknowledge that human beings are culturally embedded i.e. that they are shaped, but not determined, by culture – be it one that they have 'uncritically inherited', 'reflectively revised' or 'consciously adopted' (Parekh 2000a, p. 340). Second, that different cultures need each other in order to develop a better understanding of themselves. Parekh sees dialogue between different cultures as mutually beneficial as it offers the opportunity for a development of wider social perspectives and growth than would be possible in a culturally self-contained life. However, Parekh (2000a, p. 337) is careful to note that this dialogue can only take place within a context of at least a basic level of mutual respect and value for the existence of different cultures. Third, that one must acknowledge that cultural identities are plural and fluid in nature. By way of emphasising this point Parekh (2000a, p. 337) believes that:

Cultures grow out of conscious and unconscious interaction with each other, partly define their identity in terms of what they take to be their significant other, and are at least partially multicultural in their origins and constitution.

Parekh's (2000a, p. 340) notion of a multicultural society constituted of 'a community of citizens' and 'a community of communities' featured heavily in *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* – also known as the Parekh Report after its chair –

(Parekh 2000b) which was subject to widespread negative media coverage upon its release (see McLaughlin and Neal 2004). It was the portrayal of the report within the national media as having branded the term 'British' as racist which undermined much of the wider potential for change within the report.

The debates presented above help to inform and justify the interest of this research in forms of, and attachments to, notions of community within newly multicultural contexts and the way in which these are incorporated into policy strategies. The contestation surrounding the definitions and implementations of multiculturalist approaches to policy-making are significant for this research in and of itself. Without a clear understanding and at least some consensus of what it is that is being sought when, for example, local strategies call for Milton Keynes to be a place which 'celebrates diversity', it is difficult to know how, when or even if it has been achieved (MKLSP 2008). Research such as that upon which this thesis is based – which investigates, among other things, the way in which notions of multiculturalism are addressed by local communities and policy-makers – is well placed to shed light on the way in which these terms are applied and lived on the ground.

## **Community**

As the discussion of Parekh (2000a) demonstrated, notions of community are leant on frequently within both academic and public policy discourse when seeking to describe or understand particular populations or groups of individuals. Indeed much of the critique of multiculturalist public policy centres around the view that the way in which it recognised and celebrated cultural 'difference' among certain groups created social division and exclusion along community lines. What is also apparent,

in other words, for all its ubiquity is that community is an uncertain and contested concept.

'Community' is typically used to refer to individuals between whom there are 'good' social relations and a sense of social commonality or togetherness and who 'care about and for each other' (Mooney and Neal 2009, p. 2). However, it can also be mobilised to categorise people negatively, i.e. that there can be 'too much community'. For example, minority communities of 'being' or sentiment such as those based around religion, culture, ethnicity or nationality within the UK tend to be subjected to the most scrutiny and criticism at times of panic over the state of multicultural/multiculturalism. The strong bonds which exist between their members often lead to them being deemed to be too bounded, closed off or separate from wider society and not focused enough on 'integrating' into the social or cultural norms of the wider population. There may be a belief that communities which have a strong sense of identity are hostile towards and suspicious of those who are seen as 'outsiders' to the community in question. Mooney and Neal (2009, p. 2) note that community:

... is always, at some level, inevitably about boundaries and outsiders...the idea of processes in which some people are included while others are excluded is crucial to understanding what community means ...

A sense of community belonging can be based upon a wide range of factors, for example; interests (such as a sport or pastime), institutions (such as our schools or workplaces), places (such as the street, neighbourhood, region or country in which we live) or beliefs (religious or cultural). As these examples demonstrate, some

community identities can loosely be described as constructed around things we 'do', such as playing chess, football or bingo, keeping an allotment, working in an office environment or living in a certain area. Feeling part of such a community is likely to be dictated by self-perception. Other community identities based upon 'being' or things that we 'are' can be through self-definition but also ascribed by the perceptions of others. In the case of this thesis the most relevant community identities of 'being' could include 'Black', 'African', 'Ghanaian', 'Somali', 'Muslim', 'Christian' and 'Young people'.

This thesis is interested in exploring how multiculturally constituted communities come to be constructed and mobilised within the new city spaces of Milton Keynes. It understands communities in this sense to include both those based around things we 'do' (such as the locality in which we live) as well as things we 'are' (such as belonging to and feeling part of a particular ethnic group). The intention is to find out what community means to the research participants, as well as identifying the communities to which they feel they belong. In doing so the research investigates the role which feelings of attachment and belonging play in the process of settling into and feeling part of communities based primarily around ethnic, cultural or religious identity as well as locality.

The research also seeks to highlight the ways in which notions of community come to influence local policy-making approaches to increasingly multiculturally constituted populations. Specifically, it addresses the way that 'community' has been connected to the management of what have often become treated as 'problem populations'. For example, Jahn-Kahn (2003, p. 41) questions the traditional

approach of government agencies to working with minority ethnic communities of seeking to work through recognised 'leaders' as he suggests that doing so has the effect of defining the community itself as 'difficult' – only to be managed through those leaders. Chapters Five and Six of this thesis consider how the connection between government and notions of community has significantly limited the ability of local government to appreciate the complexity and diversity contained within these populations. It is clear that the ways in which the policy process views, defines and engages with its population via community groupings will dictate the extent to which policies comprehensively reflect local populations. Research Question Four of this research project addresses this interest through the medium of 'social capital', which is elaborated upon next, when it asks how local government and organisations draw on and incorporate migrant communities' social capital in policy strategies to enable active participation in Milton Keynes' local communities.

## **Social capital**

'Social capital' refers to the bonds and connections between people and the social networks and resources which develop as a result of these bonds. It is inextricably linked to notions of 'community' between whose members these bonds and connections are shared. The term is most commonly linked to the work of Robert Putnam (1993a; 1993b; 1995a; 1995b; 2000; 2003) and may be broken down into two main categories. The first, 'bonding' social capital refers to activity which is seen to strengthen the relationships between members of a specific group or community, the exclusive social ties that people build around homogeneity (Putnam 1993a; Leigh and Putnam 2002; Putnam 2003). 'Bridging' social capital on the other hand refers to

the strengthening of connections based upon common interests that transcend differences such as ethnicity, religion and socio-economic status.

In the context of this research the simple distinction between 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital is important. This is because, essentially, it echoes the multiple shifts in policy approaches to race and ethnic relations in the United Kingdom through the years (addressed in more detail within Chapter Three). In brief, the shift from assimilationist to multiculturalist policies which Chapter Three outlines could be framed as involving recognition of the importance of acknowledging cultural difference and the rights of different groups to engage in bonding activities. These activities are particularly important for minority ethnic communities seeking to preserve a meaningful ethnic identity. The later shift to community cohesion approaches (described in detail in Chapter Three) reflects the argument that multiculturalist policies had placed too much emphasis on difference and that division had occurred as a result.

The presence of perceived high levels of 'bonding' social capital among (particularly ethnic minority or migrant) communities within the UK has prompted negative connotations of community and the sense that certain groups are involved in too much 'bonding' and not enough 'bridging' activity and therefore possessing 'too much community', as noted above. Putnam's (2000) belief was that too much bonding social capital creates insular communities uninterested in wider social interaction and cultural integration. Putnam (2003) asserts that 'bridging' social capital, which arises from encouraging voluntary associations and interactions, is the solution to resolving social inequality and the perceived lack of social trust associated

with ethnic diversity. However, Mohan and Mohan (2002, p. 192) are sceptical about the way in which Putnam connects patterns of associational activity or community involvement to social capital and also the extent to which it is possible to demonstrate the beneficial outcomes (and indeed the creation) of social capital through participation in everyday associational activities. Mohan and Mohan (2002, p. 192) also question Putnam's choice of 'measures of participation' citing new forms of participation which involve less face-to-face interaction such as those which now exist online via chat rooms, forums and other social media. Essentially the argument is made strongly that 'not all associations are alike, not all associations are open to all, and people may join them for a variety of different reasons'. In short, that 'not all associational activity may have the outcomes predicted by Putnam' (Mohan and Mohan 2002, pp. 194-195; 206). Fine (2001) is also critical of Putnam, warning against the way he feels social capital theory places too much responsibility on small-scale community organisations and activities to solve major social problems, effectively leaving groups to fend for, and rely on, themselves. This critique is of particular relevance to the focus of this research upon the way that the Somali and Ghanaian migrant communities mobilise social capital and formal and informal capacity in its engagement with Milton Keynes' local politics and the way that local government and organisations draw on and incorporate these into policy strategies. Mooney and Neal (2009, p. 26) highlight the appeal of social capital, resting, as with its close relation community, in that 'it is not self-evident, but is highly flexible, has a wide applicability' and importantly for this research, 'emphasises individual-, family and community-produced resources'.



Nevertheless the assertion that voluntary associations between people lead to a transcendence of difference constitutes the bulk of the theoretical grounding behind contemporary policies of community cohesion in the United Kingdom (which are also assessed in more detail in Chapter Three) and therefore have a significant impact upon the local policy context of interest to this research. The 'voluntary associations' stressed by Putnam when extolling the virtues of bridging social capital also chime in some ways with emphasis placed on the 'conviviality' of routine multiculturalism by Gilroy (2004a); the powerful influence of 'sharing experience' and 'physical proximity' upon levels of understanding by Back (1996, p. 109) and the importance of meaningful inter-cultural dialogue by Amin (2002, p. 967), all of which are discussed more fully in Section 2.6.

### **How they all fit together**

The previous sections have discussed the implications of three of the key concepts drawn on in this project, namely; the different ways that multicultural societies are theorised; how the concept of community is mobilised both positively and negatively within these theories in service of affiliations based on 'being' (such as ethnic minority or migrant communities) and 'doing' (such as the locality in which we live); as well as the role played by the different types of social capital at play within these populations in both strengthening relationships (or, depending on the balance, contributing to increased division) within and between different communities. Having elaborated upon and critically reviewed these concepts the thesis turns to consider the impact of geography and 'place' upon the social interactions and community constructions taking place locally.

## **2.3 More than just a 'new setting'**

In order to understand processes of social interaction, settlement, integration and community formation amongst increasingly ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse populations in the UK's newly multicultural city spaces, it is necessary to clarify the local dynamics of such areas, recognising the 'specificity of place' (Massey 1991, p. 29). These new city spaces are not merely new settings in which to study the same old processes mentioned above, but also themselves help to shape the processes in practice. In this context, Cresswell (2004, p. 11) notes that place is:

... a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world. When we look at the world as a world of places we see different things. We see attachments and connections between people and place. We see worlds of meaning and experience... To think of an area of the world as a rich and complicated interplay of people and the environment – as a place – is to free us from thinking of it as facts and figures.

By way of evidencing how 'place' can help develop understandings of multicultural and social relations, it is helpful to look at Doreen Massey's (1991, p. 29) argument that an accurate understanding of the 'character' of a place can only be constructed by 'linking that place to places beyond' via a 'global sense of the local, a global sense of place'. As a result of a process of 'time-space-compression' – whereby spatial barriers are overcome and connections made between people, cultures and continents across the world – it becomes increasingly difficult (and unhelpful) to think of a single identity or sense of place that everyone shares. In fact, for Massey

(1991, p. 29) it becomes necessary to acknowledge that place 'is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations meeting and weaving together at a particular locus' and that everyone experiences 'place(s)' differently, whether through different journeys, interests, bonds or connections. Massey's arguments are particularly helpful in understanding the experiences of new city spaces whose populations are becoming increasingly diverse and whose local authorities are searching for a sense of collective identity based around belonging to those particular spaces or places. Reflecting on Kilburn, North London Massey (quoted in Cresswell 2004, p. 68) notes that:

The various populations and people who live in Kilburn live in it differently – they may use different shops and amenities, and have different affections and connections within and to Kilburn.

The specificity or uniqueness of a certain 'place' is accepted to derive from the fact that each place is the focus of its own distinct mixtures of wider and local social relations (acknowledged to be processes subject to change and continual reproduction themselves) as opposed to any idea of a singular identity or community (Massey 1991, p. 29). By way of challenging this notion of fixed senses of place, identity or community Massey (1991, p. 28) notes that:

... communities can exist without being in the same place – from a network of friends with like interests, to major religious, ethnic or political communities... instances of places housing single 'communities' in the sense of coherent social groups are probably... quite rare. Moreover, even where they do exist this in no way implies a single sense of place.

Massey (1991, p. 26) sees the pursuit of a strong sense of place or locality, the 'desire for fixity and for security of identity', as a reactionary response to the movement and flux created by on-going global 'time-space' changes. It is possible to use this argument to help understand how the problematisation in public policy of the presence of minority ethnic and migrant populations, cultures and practices in the UK and the view that multiculturalist policies had increased division between groups (see Section 2) prompted the search for a sense of collective and 'cohesive' communities.

Questions of race and community relations have been examined within specific sites or places for a long time. However the extent to which the important role played by 'place' within these areas has been acknowledged has varied significantly over time and it is this history which the research turns its attention to now in order to understand this trajectory in more detail.

## **2.4 Place-based studies of race relations in the UK**

In the United Kingdom there is a long history of settlement by a range of minority ethnic and migrant groups. In his book 'Staying Power' Peter Fryer (1984) notes that there had been a black population (referring to both Africans and Asians and their descendants) in the UK for close to 500 years ever since thousands of black youngsters were brought as domestic slaves in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Since the slave-trade needed ports for the docking of ships and exchanging of goods, port cities like Bristol, Liverpool and London and their surrounding areas were the first to experience the arrival of black slaves from Africa who, in some

cases, remained in these areas. These port cities continued to play a pivotal part in the arrival of black migrants to the UK in later years as the arrival of ships like the 'Empire Windrush' from Jamaica in 1948 (carrying 492 economic migrants invited to the UK in response to the post-war demand to rebuild the economy) marked the beginning of mass migration from the British colonies and former colonies (Fryer 1984, p. 372). Around the same time settlers from the Indian sub-continent also began to arrive, again for economic reasons and again in response to an official campaign by the British government to recruit migrant workers. By 1958, only ten years on from the arrival of the 'Empire Windrush' the West Indian population in the UK stood at around 125,000 and the Indian and Pakistani populations approximately a combined 55,000 (Fryer 1984, p. 373).

This history provides connections between the UK's towns and cities and those of other nations beyond its shores which have shaped its 'character', as noted by Massey (1991, p. 29) in the previous section, through a 'linking (of) that place to places beyond'. Because some of the UK's large established cities and towns had large BME populations, some have been the sites of landmark case-study based social research into issues relating to race and ethnicity. The first study to be reviewed in detail is Rex and Moore's (1967) examination of the Sparkbrook ward of Birmingham, which in the early 1960s had become a 'zone of transition' for the newly arrived and those struggling to find appropriate housing. Sparkbrook contained a high proportion of immigrants from Ireland, the Caribbean, India and Pakistan (Rex and Moore 1967, p. 273) and was identified as a 'twilight zone', a place 'where large, old houses, too good to be classified as slums, had become multi-

occupied lodging-houses' (Rex and Moore 1967, p. 20). It details how the severe restrictions upon the housing options facing BME residents at the time (low incomes, poor borrowing potential, prejudice and hostility from white landlords and estate agents and discriminatory local housing policies which offered them limited rights to Council housing) forced them to reside in substandard, and often unsuitable, private rented accommodation within this 'twilight zone' in disproportionate numbers. Rex and Moore (1967) focus their attention on the availability of housing and the presence of distinct housing classes within the city in order to draw attention to the exclusionary practices experienced by and between ethnic groups at the time. They state, for example, that:

Competition for the scarce resource of housing leads to the formation of groups very often on an ethnic basis and one group will attempt to restrict the opportunities of another by using whatever sanctions it can. In an extreme case this would mean the use of violence... (Rex and Moore 1967, p. 16).

Of interest for this research is the way that Rex and Moore (1967) offer detailed insight into the social dynamics of the local area of Sparkbrook, its populations and the impact of community associations in strengthening social bonds within – but also, simultaneously, divisions between – the different local minority groups. Through their fieldwork Rex and Moore noted that, despite living in close proximity to each other, members of the different minority groups lived almost wholly separate lives as a result of a multitude of factors, most notably their distinct cultural and religious differences and the climate of severe racial prejudice. They describe the persisting influence of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as local Irish-owned shops,

cafes and pubs and Irish 'County Associations' which 'arrange(s) sick visiting, helps with travel arrangements, provides informal contacts through which County Clare men can get jobs ... also organizes regular weekly dances and 'socials' (Rex and Moore 1967, p. 154) as contributing towards the sense of an 'Irish colony' within Sparkbrook (Rex and Moore 1967, p. 148). The Pakistani community is also noted as having 'its own culture and institutions' as well as its fair share of stores which act as a hub of community activities (Rex and Moore 1967, p. 164). Also, albeit limited in its membership and focused primarily upon formal meetings, Rex and Moore (1967, p. 158) discuss the part played by the main organisation for West Indians, the Commonwealth Welfare Association.

The influence of all of these institutions and sites of 'bonding', support and resource within certain communities of belonging has helped to develop this project's interest in formations of, and attachments to, notions of community and the exercise and use of forms of social capital. Rex and Moore's discussion of the Sparkbrook Association and the part it played in preserving the morale of this neighbourhood also echoes the focus of this research and the earlier examination of community and social capital theory. The Sparkbrook Association was a residents' association which was involved in, among other things, generating parks and playgrounds for children to play in as well as centres containing activities such as an Old Peoples Lunch Club, Citizens Advice Bureau and a Youth Club (Rex and Moore 1967, p. 218). Rex and Moore believed that by involving all sections of the community the Association was able to quell the rise of 'open racialism' (Rex and Moore 1967, p. 224). Rex and Moore's take on the significance of the Association

within the local area at the time can be summarised effectively in the following excerpt:

The Sparkbrook Association was important as a total community organization. It, more than any other organization, was capable of finding some degree of consensus and defining common interests amongst the conflicting sub-groups which made up the community. It could hold in balance the tension between groups and initiate corporate action. For all its weaknesses it mattered that it was there and other communities which lacked such an organization were more likely to see their problems in purely racial terms (Rex and Moore 1967, p. 228-229).

Rex and Moore identify the Sparkbrook Association's ability to cater for all of the various sections of the community and ensure that '...open racialism will be kept well within bounds' (Rex and Moore 1967, p. 224). However, in noting that 'the various groups promoted by the Association tend to be ethnically homogeneous... Sparkbrook thus certainly does not have anything like a non-racial community centre' (Rex and Moore 1967, p. 222), it appears clear that the lack of so-called 'open racialism' does not necessarily correspond with any meaningful contact, interaction or voluntary association between the groups in the area a la Putnam (2000). Therefore, while the narrative of an area characterised by the marginalisation and social exclusion of ethnic minority groups remains true in this study of Sparkbrook, Rex and Moore's (1967) research has helped to reinforce one of the arguments of this research of understanding issues such as race and community in relation to 'place'.



Following on from this study of Sparkbrook is another study led by Rex on race and community relations, again based in Birmingham, although this time in the Handsworth ward of the city in the 1970s. Birmingham was the site of extensive research in this area during this period. Due to its status as one of the focal points of settling migrant communities of all backgrounds, Birmingham at that time was a key site within which to study settlement patterns and multiculturally constituted communities. Rex and Tomlinson (1979) broaden the focus from the issue of housing and housing classes to the impact of resource allocation and access more widely, looking at employment, education and housing. The premise of Rex and Tomlinson (1979) is the story of a local area experiencing on-going confrontation between its different ethnic and racial groups, specifically the local white British response to living in an increasingly ethnically and racially diverse place and the experiences of the West Indian and Asian immigrant populations settling there. In a sign of the changing times, Rex and Tomlinson (1979) in their study of Handsworth develop the portrayal of community formation made by Rex and Moore (1967) in Sparkbrook that, despite the conflict that its inhabitants experienced the ultimate goal of immigrant populations was to assimilate into suburban society. Rex and Tomlinson (1979) conclude that ethnic communities were concerned with pursuing their own goals through their own separate organisations and institutions. Reinforcing the significance and specificity of 'place' and supporting the earlier arguments developed by Rex and Moore (1967), Rex and Tomlinson (1979) found that Handsworth, in contrast to Sparkbrook, lacked a collective local community association (such as the Sparkbrook Association) and with it any unified sense of community between its residents. Instead Rex and Tomlinson (1979) suggested that:

...Handsworth has not one population but three ... since each of these populations has different goals and would wish to put available physical and commercial resources to different uses, there is bound to be conflict (Rex and Tomlinson 1979, p. 93 - 94).

The three populations referred to are older white residents, West Indians and Asians. Rex and Tomlinson (1979) found that the white residents of Handsworth in the 1970s were typically older and in search of peace and quiet which they felt was threatened or prevented by the arrival of these two large immigrant communities. The West Indians arrived, not just willing to become assimilated, but regarding themselves as having arrived in the 'mother-country', only to experience 'systematic discrimination and open hostility' by the local white British population (Rex and Tomlinson 1979, p. 94). The key to the Asian immigrant experience, Rex and Tomlinson argue, is that migrants accepted 'the inevitability of ... having to live in the diaspora' and 'never envisage(d) anything other than maintaining [their] own cultural and social order in a strange land' (Rex and Tomlinson 1979, p. 95).

The different experiences of these three immigrant groups highlight, albeit somewhat crudely, the different approaches taken by groups living within a multiculturally constituted community with the shift away from assimilationist and towards multicultural notions of society during the late 1970s, and, most importantly for this research, the possibility of developing and forming understandings of complicated social phenomena from a detailed consideration of a particular 'place' or context.

Rex and Tomlinson (1979) conclude by pointing out that while the context of racial prejudice, inequality and discrimination within Handsworth during the 1970s was acted out by local white residents it was most heavily attributable to those within local government with the power to influence the allocation of resources across the city in key areas such as housing, education and employment (Rex and Tomlinson 1979, p. 93). Issues of local policy-making and local authority approaches to issues of race and multiculturalism will be addressed within this research in more detail in Chapters Three and Five.

Parallels can be easily drawn between Rex and Moore (1967) and Pryce (1979) in his study of the West Indian population of the St Paul's ward of Bristol. While Rex and Moore (1967) focused primarily on local housing standards and availability, using the issue to highlight wider discrimination and exclusion, Pryce's (1979) study was more purely place-based and was broadly concerned with highlighting and interpreting the experiences of the population of St Paul's at that time. Specifically, Pryce (1979) was interested in the effect that the climate of severe racial prejudice and discrimination, sub-standard housing and high-unemployment associated with living in St Paul's had on the West Indian population. St Paul's, like Sparkbrook, exemplified the effects of the 'white-flight' dynamic, resulting in the residential concentration of the West Indian population within its large, low-rent houses, converted to houses in multiple occupation, and a notable lack of social cohesion and community belonging within the area. These problems, among others, led Pryce (1979, p. 25) to describe St Paul's, controversially, as a 'shanty town':

... A decaying residential community due for redevelopment ... fast deteriorating into a slum because of inadequate sanitary provisions and overcrowding... regarded as a low-status area to be moved out of as quickly as possible to clean, safe, 'out-of-town' places.

Pryce (1979) divided responses to living in St Pauls and experiencing this challenging climate into two walks of life (also split into further sub-categories), the 'stable law-abiding' orientation, who worked for a living, and the 'expressive-disreputable' that did not work but rather 'hustled', most often through illegal practices. It is worth noting that despite his downbeat portrayal of this 'shanty town' Pryce (1979) did find St Paul's to be a busy commercial area and the site of everyday mixing and interaction between its various ethnic groups such as the West Indians, Pakistanis, Irish and Poles (but notably not the 'White British'), the possibilities of which will be addressed in Section 2.6 of this chapter. Nevertheless, for Pryce (1979), the divide within the local area was clear and one could argue that this manifested itself in a divide in feelings of 'attachment to place' between the two loosely defined groups within the 'expressive-disreputable' orientation.

The portrayal of negotiations between the two groups identified in this study suggests very little interaction or bridging activities between them. However, as in Rex and Moore (1967), the influential part played by religion and local churches in supporting West Indian immigrants in St Pauls is discussed. An understanding of the (sometimes unexpected) divisions which can exist within what are often perceived by policy-makers as relatively fixed social, ethnic and cultural groups emerges from this discussion of Pentecostal churches, in the case of Pryce's (1979) 'stable law-abiding'

orientation, and the Rastafarianism of the 'expressive-disreputable' orientation. This issue will be examined in more detail in Chapter Six on community formation and processes of migrant settlement. Pryce's (1979) place based approach uses Bristol as its area of interest. By situating his research in a specific locality Pryce (1979) demonstrates the role that the physical and social spaces of St Pauls play in the lives of its residents and it is this role of 'place' that is championed throughout this chapter.

All three of these studies focus on the forms of marginalisation, exclusion and segregation experienced by the BME populations studied. Each of them notes, to varying degrees, the severity and impact of pervading forms of racial prejudice and discrimination upon members of BME groups in the UK and the effect that this has upon their ability to settle or integrate successfully into a local area or neighbourhood. Nevertheless they also begin to identify evidence of academic interest in the possibilities (and impact) of cross-cultural contact and interaction between individuals from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds from as early as Rex and Moore's (1967) discussion of the roles played by the Sparkbrook Association.

This section has provided examples of how place-based race relations research has drawn attention to opportunities for cross-cultural interaction within specific places and localities. These studies form the starting point of the broader case made within this chapter for a view of place as not merely the setting for social research but as an active participant in making up social relations. It has focused on early studies which emphasised the importance of place, and the next section will discuss the shift which took place during the 1980s away from studies of specific

places and increasingly towards examinations of pertinent issues, policies, and questions of identity before considering the ways in which there has been a return to more place based sensibilities and reflecting on the implications of drawing on conceptions of place in developing an analysis of multicultural in practice.

## **2.5 Issues, policies and identity: a shift away from place**

During the 1980s there was a noticeable shift away from approaches that sought to understand race through geographical location and the social relations associated with it. In a decade in which Thatcher and the New Right maintained political control and serious urban unrest marked its beginning and end (with disturbances in Chapeltown in Leeds, St. Pauls in Bristol, Handsworth in Birmingham, Tottenham and Brixton in London, Toxteth in Liverpool and Moss Side in Manchester) the themes of identity and access to social goods and services became the focal point for race theorists, researchers, activists and community groups. Geography was not precluded from research; however it was no longer the dominant context for attention and analysis that it had once been in the 1960s and 1970s. Where once academic interest was foregrounded on the impact made by specific sites and spaces of interaction, the focus shifted towards broader questions of widespread racism, disadvantage, discrimination, immigration legislation, nation, nationalism and identity as an understanding of some of the shared experiences of ethnic minority groups in the UK, as well as causes for (and solutions to) the unrest, were sought.

One example of this is to be found in the research conducted on the different experiences, and, indeed discriminatory treatment, that BME children faced

within school systems and the educational environment (e.g., see Connolly and Troyna 1998). Another example is the focus of other researchers on questions of housing (e.g., see Sarre et al. 1989; Henderson and Karn 1984) and also, given the widespread riots and unrest, urban policy and policing (e.g., see Hall et al 1978) were inevitably key arenas for discussion and research.

Orbiting around these studies and literatures was a growing focus on the notion of national and diasporic identities and the interplay between (and significance of) each one. A seminal text of this period was the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1982) *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* which marked the cultural turn of race studies and opened up the agenda for thinking through the politics of nation and identity. This was followed by Gilroy's (1987) *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* which along with providing an indictment of defensive British culture and the failures of formal policy-making argued that it was within the informal realm of music that there were signs of a more embedded multicultural, interethnic exchange and a rejection of racism. Avtar Brah's (1996) *Cartographies of Diaspora* was similarly important, foregrounding as it did the idea of capably managed hybrid identities rather than black communities being viewed as experiencing an 'identity crisis'. Brah (1996) was primarily concerned with the study of difference, diversity and commonality and the inter-relationships which exist between race, gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, generation and nationalism. Rejecting essentialist notions of identity which give primacy to one 'axis of differentiation' over others, Brah (1996, p. 246) instead views identities as multiplicitous processes comprising relationships between such axes rather than a

choice (or power struggle) between them. There is also an acknowledgement of the impact of place upon forms of identity in Brah's (1996, p. 242) definition of 'diaspora space' as the site of the imminence of 'diaspora', 'border' and the 'politics of location', in which she discusses the entanglement and intersectionality of the shared lived experiences which take place in areas where the 'native' and the 'immigrant' (or insider and outsider) live and interact. Brah's (1996, p. 242) definition of 'diaspora space' echoes in many ways the argument made by Massey (1991, p. 29) in Section 2.3 around significance of the 'global sense of place'.

In all of this writing, place and geography persist, but with a much more peripheral presence or in a different register. The street, music, the classroom, the housing department, the immigration office all became sites of research attention and activity, although without explicitly acknowledging 'place' as central to understanding the concepts and issues in question. In public policy research, places become case study sites for the investigation of wider phenomena. So, for example, it has been commonplace for local, place-based, initiatives to be implemented in response to violent disturbances as a means of 'fire-fighting'. This was the case in Liverpool where initiatives such as a 'Minister for Merseyside', the Merseyside Task Force and the Merseyside Development Corporation all came as a response to the 'riots' of 1981. In this context Ben-Tovim (1988) was interested in contrasting political approaches towards tackling issues of racial inequality during the late 1980s and uses Liverpool as a case-study. He found that in Liverpool the long-established black population (consisting of about half a million inhabitants) were disproportionately unemployed and also frequently deliberately excluded from the



relevant power structures (Ben-Tovim et al. 1986). Both factors were likely to have contributed to their involvement in the violent disturbances in Toxteth in 1981. Ben-Tovim (1988) condemned the lack of consultation with local black organisations and agencies in the distribution and use of resources on the part of both central and local government. Ben-Tovim (1988) represents another example of the use of a specific locality, context or place to highlight wider concerns. In fact, his research suggested at the time that the rest of the UK might be developing a 'Liverpool pattern' of race relations – referring to the chronic unemployment and marginalisation experienced by Liverpool's black population.

In their study of racialised local politics, political participation and issues of political representation within Birmingham between 1989 and 1992, however, Solomos and Back (1995) begin to bring the two traditions together, in an account focused primarily on the city of Birmingham and its experience of:

... Changes in the involvement of minorities in the political system, the emergence of new political forces and movements and the responses of the main political parties to issues such as the representation of black minorities and the emergence of black politicians (Solomos and Back 1995, p. 3).

Revisiting Birmingham utilising a detailed understanding of this particular local context (which they describe as having played a vital role in the shaping of the politics of race in British society), Solomos and Back (1995) argue that they are able to investigate a typical setting which represents broader national debates in microcosm and champion this place-based approach of using one local context to highlight wider trends explicitly in their final chapter. However, they also (Solomos

and Back 1995, p. 211-212) contend that research should: '...focus on the ways in which particular avenues of change are possible as a result of specific political, cultural, social and economic contexts'. They assert the positive effect of examining developments within cities and towns such as Birmingham in order to comprehend, in this case, the changing forms of minority participation in politics and their impact on political institutions (Solomos and Back 1995, pp. 211-212). In other words, for Solomos and Back place and locality matter, as more than just sites of generalised case studies.

The return to place as an important aspect of analysis was also apparent in the discussion of young people. In the writing of the 1980s and 1990s they were a focus of attention as a 'unit' of analysis in which the relationship between their formations of identity and culture and their experiences of, for example, police (CCCS 1982) and teachers (Mac an Ghail 1988), was explored. Les Back's (1996) ethnographic study of young people living in Deptford, South London in the early 1990s marked something of a return to geography – or at least place - in race studies, in that what he explored in South London was part of an iterative relationship with place and people. Identity remains a core concern but place is included in terms of how it comes to be understood and formed. The next section begins to discuss some of the implications of this way of thinking.

## **2.6 Meaningful interaction or insurmountable segregation?**

Back's study (Back 1996) compares and contrasts the experiences of multiculturalism among young people living in two different (but neighbouring) parts of South

London, 'Southgate' and 'Riverview'. While Riverview is described as heavily invested in community aesthetics, Southgate (in the eyes of Back and his participants) was principally about 'housing as many people as possible', in tower blocks and low-rise apartments. Unlike Riverview the local authority operated no selection process in terms of housing in Southgate and simply housed people according to need (Back 1996, p. 103). These and other factors led to Back estimating Southgate to have a black population of between 30 – 50 per cent (compared with just 8 per cent for Riverview) with a significant population of Mediterranean origin (Turkish and Greek Cypriots), a small Indian population and a small – then recent – settlement of Vietnamese refugees, while Riverview is 77 per cent white (Back 1996, p. 102).

In discussing notions of community, multicultural and interaction between people of different ethnic groups Back (1996) explored the part that specific areas, and the way they are characterised within local popular discourse, can play in encouraging or discouraging inter-racial/cultural contact. For example, one of Back's black interviewees describes how misguided approaches to housing allocation sought to place black people together in Southgate because of 'stereotyped ideas about the 'black community''. In fact, she points out that the black community is as multi-faceted as the white, but that, ultimately the black residents were, when asked (as part of Council housing allocation processes), disproportionately likely to choose to live in Southgate. This was because they were effectively being presented with the 'choice' between living in poor housing in an area with few black residents and a reputation for racial harassment or equally poor housing in an area which has a large black population and, therefore, it was presumed, less chance of experiencing such

harassment (Back 1996, p. 105). Back (1996) observed how his two case study areas were divided in the public consciousness into 'no-go areas' for white and black people respectively. White people from other areas would generally not visit Southgate for fear of crime, specifically mugging, which was identified by some respondents to the study as a 'black crime' (Back 1996, p. 116). Black people from other areas would generally not visit Riverview as it had a reputation of being unsafe and a place of overt street racism. While on the surface Southgate and Riverview are both racialised and criminalised in their own ways via external forces, by speaking to residents within both of these areas Back found that the '...most important feature that distinguishes Southgate [from Riverview] is the existence of a powerful and racially inclusive localism' (Back 1996, p. 122). He found that interviewees would comment on the positive impact that living in Southgate would have in uniting the local community and bringing people from different backgrounds together. Again, as with Rex and Moore (1967), the role of the Tenants' Association in uniting this ethnically diverse community is championed, although to a lesser extent, and primarily within the Southgate area, principally as a result of the poor housing conditions and increasing levels of poverty. One white interviewee noting the positive influence living in Southgate had on her son commented:

...mix[ing] with people from a lot of different cultural backgrounds and races and things, I think he'll get a lot out of it. He's certainly a lot more tolerant of people than I was at his age... (Back 1996, p. 108-109).

Back (1996, p. 109) notes that the sharing of experience and physical proximity within residential areas has a powerful influence on levels of understanding,

tolerance and perceptions of race between individuals from different racial or ethnic groups, providing a connection to Putnam's (2003) argument of the importance of 'bridging' social capital arising from voluntary associations and interactions across ethnic minority or migrant communities. Back's (1996) discussion of racisms and multiculturalism in the lives of young people – highlighting the importance and possibility of spaces of transcultural dialogue – is directly relevant to the concerns of this project, although, like Amin (2002, p. 967) he focuses on the possibilities that exist in older urban spaces. The concern of this chapter (and of this thesis) with race and ethnic relations and the inclusion of difference within the UK's new urban spaces demands a detailed consideration of emerging work on theories of 'urban interculturalism'.

In the 2000s place has been part of emergent debate around interculturalism. Intercultural theorists are not entirely convinced by a cosmopolitan approach which assumes the 'gradual erosion of cultural difference through interethnic mixture and hybridisation' (Amin 2002, p. 967). Ash Amin (2002) explores the possibilities for intercultural understanding and dialogue in the wake of the disturbances of 2001 in the northern towns of Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in much the same vein as multicultural policies were instituted by local authorities in response to the riots in most major British cities (Birmingham, Bristol, London, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester) during the 1980s (mentioned in Section 2.5). Reports into the disturbances in 2001 (such as Cantle 2001; Clarke 2001; Denham 2001; Ouseley 2001; Ritchie 2001) concluded that insufficient levels of social bridging or cohesion between different ethnic groups and a lack of open acknowledgment and positive

reinforcement of the distinct cultures (and cultural practices) of the various BME groups within these inner-city areas were the most likely causes of the disturbances which took place, despite the climate of severe disadvantage, inequality and racial discrimination which existed during this period. Amin (2002, p. 967) argues that these 'versions of multiculturalism ...stress cultural difference without resolving the problem of communication between cultures' and are (and always have been) inadequate for the task of fostering a truly inclusive society. In light of this, Amin focuses his attention on 'the everyday urban – the daily negotiation of ethnic difference – rather than on the national frame of race and ethnicity in Britain', as was the case with multiculturalism as a public policy movement during the 1980s (Amin 2002, p. 959). This shift in focus away from the national towards local everyday interactions, once again reinforces the importance of place, and the specificity of the 'particular constellation(s) of social relations' (Massey 1991, p. 29) which take place within them and contribute to various bonds and connections, in understanding contemporary race and community relations in the UK.

In discussing 'urban interculturalism', Amin is interested in emphasising the 'local liveability' of contemporary race and ethnic relations, namely the possibilities for everyday social contact in 'local sites of everyday encounter', where he believes cultural transgression becomes possible (Amin 2002, p. 970). Visibility and encounter within the open spaces of the city such as cafés, parks, streets and shopping centres and the casual encounters and interactions which take place as a result are often perceived to be the most likely location for intercultural exchange and dialogue. However, the reality is that many urban spaces experience little meaningful

interaction between strangers, irrespective of their cultural background. Increasingly these public spaces are more accurately described as 'spaces of transit', often territorialised by particular groups and not always naturally conducive to 'inter' or 'multi'-cultural engagement (Amin and Thrift 2002).

Recognising the limitations of encounters within the open spaces of the city, Amin (2002, p. 959) views the constitution of 'micro-publics' where 'prosaic negotiations' are compulsory, such as the workplaces, schools, colleges, youth centres, sports clubs, and other spaces of association as 'crucial for reconciling and overcoming ethnic cultural differences' because they are structured as 'spaces of interdependence and habitual engagement'. It is for this reason that this research contains a focus upon such sites within the new city of Milton Keynes and made a point of interviewing key individuals at the heart of these sites such as youth workers and religious leaders as well as the young people themselves. Amin (2002, p. 970) argues that particular attention needs to be paid to the impact that institutions like further education colleges can have on breaking down social and cultural barriers amongst young people. He describes how once young people are removed from the familiar (and potentially territorialised) settings of their local neighbourhoods and schools and placed within a new setting (and engaged in the pursuit of shared ventures) engagements with strangers are likely to become more commonplace. However, just as the limitations of cosmopolitan approaches identified earlier, intercultural contact in and of itself does not automatically lead to meaningful cultural transgression and intercultural dialogue. Nevertheless the, more modest,

argument made by Amin (2002) is that the likelihood of such dialogue is increased within the 'micro-publics' which he identifies.

Amin (2002) and Back (1996) share a perspective which suggests that working through fixed categories of 'community' (such as those described in Section 2.2) is a dead end. Instead they highlight the reality of 'cultural dynamism' within minority ethnic (and white) communities and the limitations that such a standpoint places upon the members of these 'communities'. It is telling that the approach of working through such fixed categories remains an integral part of the community cohesion agenda which is currently at the forefront of both national and local public policy as an alternative to the perceived failure of what have been identified as divisive multiculturalist policies. Back (1996) points to forms of 'negotiated ethnicity' which take place both via individual actors interacting in a specific micro context (most importantly for Back within multiracial friendships) and between negotiations of publicly generated definitions of identity. In the context of individual interaction Back (1996, p. 158) demonstrates how young white and black people have constructed their own alternative public sphere in which truly mixed ethnicities can develop resulting in cultural forms that are open to young South Londoners regardless of origin. For Back (1996, p. 159):

Young people living in Southgate are creating cultures that are neither simply black nor simply white. These syncretic cultures produce inter-racial harmony while celebrating diversity; they defy the logic of the new racism and result in volatile cultural forms that can be simultaneously black and white.



As detailed earlier, both Back (1996) and Amin (2002) contend that it is the new possibilities for interaction between individuals in urban spaces, rather than the arid fixities of community cohesion that matter. Highlighting new forms of ethnicity and identity characterised by hybridity poses poignant questions for policy approaches to questions of multicultural and cohesion that Chapter Three addresses in detail.

The focus within intercultural theory upon local sites of 'everyday encounter', inter-cultural dialogue and the significance of so-called 'micro-publics' offers insight into how communities are formed and how the types of interaction or voluntary association theorised by Putnam (2000) come to take place and affect new migrant settlement and local multicultural policy-making processes. Reflecting on the key concerns of urban inter-cultural theory has helped to frame this thesis and its interests in, among other things; the establishment of multiculturally constituted communities in new urban spaces and the processes of social inclusion within them (paying particular attention to the role of schools, provisions for young people and religious centres in facilitating – or restricting – multicultural exchange and community well-being); how social capital and formal and informal capacity are mobilised by migrant communities to develop a sense of belonging and attachment to their local geographies and also potentially drawn on within policy strategies in identifying opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of multicultural, community cohesion and social inclusion initiatives.

Arguably one weakness of contemporary urban intercultural theory is its lack of a significant empirical grounding derived from primary research. Clayton (2009) has gone some way towards addressing this empirical deficit with his qualitative

study with young people in the city of Leicester on their everyday understanding of inter-ethnic relations. Considered a 'multicultural success' due to the relative absence of inter-ethnic tension, support for minority organisations and extensive political representation from minority ethnic communities, Leicester provides Clayton with an appropriate context in which to assess the idea of the everyday spatiality of inter-ethnic relations, using empirical material from research conducted within the city of Leicester. Clayton (2009, p. 484) examines the 'everyday experiences of young people in Leicester, their everyday spatial trajectories, their own emergent identities, their attitudes towards and experiences of differentiated 'others' as well as their relationship to the idea of Leicester as a 'successful multicultural city''. In discussing the spatialities of everyday inter-cultural contact Clayton notes that: 'for some individuals and social groups the everyday is largely constructed of spaces and routes of the familiar' and that there is limited mobility across the neighbourhoods of the city based on a 'combination of a lack of need to visit other areas...a lack of ability and opportunity to do so in the form of economic and cultural capital, fear of neighbouring 'white' territories and anxieties around racial difference' (Clayton 2009, pp. 485-491). These findings indicate significant and persistent barriers to inter-cultural encounter and dialogue. Clayton (2009, p. 493) concludes that while Leicester is portrayed as successfully multicultural it cannot yet be considered an inter-cultural city since, while co-existing peacefully, ethnic groups remain isolated from one another both physically and socially. Nevertheless his research makes a strong case for substantiating investigations into the possibilities of 'prosaic encounters', conviviality and intercultural dialogue using empirical data from specific local sites of multicultural interaction. Conducting these investigations within

the local context of a new city space will offer a more well-rounded understanding of processes of social inclusion and intercultural interaction within the UK today.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented an argument in support of place-based approaches to (and understandings of) contemporary race and community relations within the United Kingdom. By reviewing landmark studies of ethnic minority populations within large urban areas it was possible to identify two main factors affecting the social dynamics of ethnically diverse local areas which relate directly to the stated aims and research questions of this study and have informed the theoretical and methodological approaches taken (described and justified in more detail later in Chapter Four).

First, emphasis is placed on the impact of ethnic or locally based community associations and religious centres as spaces of social bonding within different ethnic groups in a local area. Some of the very early studies reviewed such as Rex and Moore (1967) are optimistic about the impact that community associations can have on ethnic minority and migrant groups as they argue that these associations promote the commonalities shared by group members and, as such, form a support network that caters for the social and cultural needs of these groups and aids processes of integration and the construction of active citizens. Studies produced later are decidedly less optimistic in this regard and instead focus upon the perceived divisive effect of community associations based on race, ethnicity and nationality upon the local community of a geographical area. Rex and Tomlinson (1979) found that ethnic

minority and migrant communities were no longer aiming to assimilate into society but instead were concerned with pursuing their own individual agenda and goals and as such the feeling was of not one population but several and that these populations were engaged in an on-going conflict for resources. The level of detailed debate surrounding community associations and religious centres and their effect upon community formations and structures serves to justify this project's original intention of speaking to leaders and representatives from these organisations in order to uncover notions of attachment, belonging and inclusion.

Second, the role of other sites of local interaction (such as shops, cafes, pubs, parks and playgrounds) in strengthening bonds, but also divisions, between local minority groups is discussed on various occasions and by several authors (such as Amin 2002; Back 1996; Clayton 2009). This chapter has demonstrated that these sites have been a focus of academic attention in research on race, ethnic and community relations in the United Kingdom from as early as the 1960s, and more recently within urban intercultural theory. It is therefore logical that this study of new urban spaces, given its interest in investigating processes of social inclusion and community formation, should also assess the impact of both formal associations and sites of everyday encounter upon processes of community formation and attachment.

The two factors outlined here point to a core concern of this project which is the back and forth between what can loosely be referred to as two common approaches to issues of race and community relations in multiculturally constituted areas and communities. The first approach (which can be generalised as the

'segregationist' approach) typically, detailed by several of the historical studies reviewed in Section 2.4 of this chapter points to entrenched social divisions and segregation between groups and tends to prioritise recommendations to tackle these via national-scale public policy (see Cattle 2001). The second, held by 'contact' or 'intercultural' theorists, place greater emphasis on the possibilities generated by convivial, everyday contact and interaction between people from different (primarily racial, ethnic and cultural) backgrounds. In this approach, moments of inter-cultural (racial, ethnic) contact are seen as a regular part of daily life and the goal is to understand how to maximise their potential to bring people together in order to foster a prosperous multicultural society (see Amin 2002).

The literature reviewed within this chapter demonstrates the trend among race theorists and researchers to concentrate their efforts and interest in well-established large urban areas such as Birmingham (Rex and Moore 1967; Rex and Tomlinson 1979; Solomos and Back 1995), Bristol (Pryce 1979), Liverpool (Ben-Tovim 1988), London (Back 1996) and Leicester (Clayton 2009). It offers the reader an understanding of the relationship between race and place and demonstrates how places can affect, and are affected by, the relations and connections between the people and groups residing within them and the various different cultures and continents which influence them (Massey 1991, p. 29). By emphasising the local liveability of contemporary race and ethnic relations and the power of 'micro-publics' (Amin 2002) intercultural theorists reject the viability of nationally-focused and policy-based approaches in tackling inter-ethnic conflict and divisions. Place-based approaches to understanding these issues make it possible to explore the

significance of convivial everyday encounters and the locally grounded notions of community which exist within specific places.

Clearly there is a strong historical tradition of using place to understand race. This study argues that since they are now increasingly diverse it has become just as important to study new city spaces such as Milton Keynes now as it was for authors like Rex and Moore (1967) to study places like Birmingham then. In order to do so comprehensively it is necessary to take a detailed look at the historical trajectory of approaches to multicultural policy-making which have shaped (and been shaped by) the presence and experience of ethnic minority and migrant communities on both the national (Chapter Three) and local (Chapter Five) levels.

# 3. Policy approaches to race, multiculturalism and community: A case of history repeating?

---

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with tracking and reflecting upon significant moments in public policy development in order to advance an understanding of how issues of diversity and 'living together with difference' are approached and managed by central and local government. It focuses primarily upon the community cohesion agenda (which was in place nationally, and in the process of being implemented locally within Milton Keynes, during the period in which this research was conducted) and how it has been developed and informed by the approaches which have come before it.

The chapter returns to the concepts of multiculturalism, community and social capital explored in the previous chapter and examines the roles these have played in informing the historical trajectory of multicultural policy-making in the UK. This relationship between academic theory and policy practice is central to the nature of this ESRC CASE research project and is important for the research for two main reasons. First, because the project aims to develop an understanding of *how the social capital of migrant communities is incorporated into and drawn on within policy strategies seeking to enable active participation in Milton Keynes' local communities*. Second, because exploring the relationship between the concepts of multiculturalism,

community and social capital and the approaches to multicultural policy-making examined within this chapter help to foreground the project's wider interest in *the opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of multicultural, community cohesion and social inclusion initiatives*. Both of these issues are explored in greater detail in the context of Milton Keynes in Chapter Five.

The United Kingdom has experienced decades of immigration and, as a result of its imperial past, has long possessed an ethnically and culturally diverse population. The pace of this immigration quickened after the Second World War with large-scale migration from the then British colonies with the majority of the Black Caribbean and Asian settlement taking place in the 1950s, the 1960s and the early 1970s as a result of post-war economic expansion. Also, as noted within Chapter One, recent migration patterns of those arriving in the UK have become more varied and complex, now incorporating many new ethnic, religious and cultural groups as the result of an array of different migration trajectories and motivating factors. As a result it has become increasingly common in the UK for areas experiencing diversity characterised by a small number of relatively long established and large minority groups, living and working within a shared space, to be characterised instead by what has been called 'super-diversity' with a constantly changing and reshaping population, which includes a far wider range of groups and backgrounds (Vertovec 2006; 2007). The diverse populations which developed as a result of these migration patterns have typically been perceived by policy-makers in national and local government as raising numerous issues and challenges including (institutional) racism, social exclusion and inter-ethnic tension, division and conflict.



This chapter argues that policy approaches in this area are fragile and are continually shifting in response to a range of factors including major events (such as urban disturbances or 'race riots' – most recently in the northern Pennine towns – and terrorist attacks such as those of 9/11 in New York and 7/7 in London), changes in government, and shifts in public mood. While acknowledging some of these very real challenges it sees the potential for a shift in emphasis towards a greater recognition of the potential opportunities that a population containing a wealth of diversity may present.

In the United Kingdom policy approaches for managing issues of difference and the conflict which arises between communities can be framed using three identifiable 'moments'. First, early 'assimilationist' approaches which placed the emphasis on maintaining a culturally homogenous society and expected new migrants to abandon their cultural norms and practices and adopt those of the wider British population. Second, 'multiculturalist' approaches which were more 'tolerant' of difference and concerned with the representation and recognition of diversity. Third, the 'community cohesion' model which, prompted by fears over increasing ethnic segregation and the leading of 'parallel lives' by different groups, aimed to foster common (national and local) identities and a set of shared values in order to counter a perceived lack of strong social bonds or 'cohesion' both between individuals and between communities (Cantle 2001). As is the case with all three 'moments', it can be said that none ever completely cease and disappear completely. While new ideas and approaches arise and become more common, certain aspects of each approach persist in various (albeit often significantly transformed) ways within

mainstream public consciousness and formal policy making processes. By presenting a brief outline of the first two major policy moments this chapter seeks to develop a better understanding of the third, providing signposting towards elements that have been carried over from earlier approaches in the process.

This chapter is divided into three sections representing a substantive review of key national-level policy reports on issues of multicultural and community in the UK broken down into the early assimilationist approaches of the 1960s (Section 3.2), the multicultural policy-making of the 1970s along with reflections on the anti-racist approaches emerging in the early 1980s (Section 3.3) and finally the move towards the 'community cohesion' model in the 2000s (Section 3.4). The *Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) – Winning hearts and minds* initiative (DCLG 2007) also provides an example of a policy which has affected rates of community cohesion and social well-being. PVE was developed in response to the perceived threat of terrorism and Islamic extremism in the UK and introduced beside the national community cohesion agenda and local strategies in different ways depending on the approach of each locality. A range of commentators such as Kundnani (2009), senior members of the Home Office in the new coalition government (see Travis 2010) and members of the Communities and Local Government Committee on Preventing Violent Extremism (House of Commons 2010) have differently raised a number of issues about the way in which the initiative was implemented. All suggested that it had in many cases had a detrimental effect on community relations. The initiative and the criticisms levied against it will also be reviewed in a final section (Section 3.5) on the national-scale and returned to in the Milton Keynes context in Chapter Five. Each section offers a

background to national policy approaches at the time and an understanding of how these have affected multiculturally constituted communities and local community-making practices. Reviewing each of these strategies and the ways in which they have fallen in and out of favour with (and use by) different national and local governments helps to evidence the argument made by this chapter that policies relating to community and multicultural are subject to regular revision and change.

### **3.2 Early assimilationist approaches**

The earliest policy responses to the arrival of migrants in the UK, in the 1950s and 1960s, followed an expectation that it would be desirable for them to be incorporated as smoothly and quickly as possible into British society. It was during this period that the UK first experienced large-scale immigration from the Commonwealth, primarily the West Indies and the Indian sub-continent, and while central government policy focused on encouraging these new arrivals to 'assimilate' to the cultural norms and values of wider society (as reinforced in 1965 in the first of a series of Acts of Parliament prohibiting racial discrimination) it was largely left to local authorities to manage the practicalities involved. The process of transitioning immigrants into their new surroundings was initially performed informally by the local population only later becoming part of a more formal process led by Community Relations Councils which were directed by the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants (later the Community Relations Commission) (Young 1990, p. 23).

In keeping with this 'assimilation expectation' it was common during this period for central government approaches to immigration and race issues to be indirect and low-key in nature in order to avoid the appearance or perception of unfair or preferential treatment for the new ethnic minority immigrant population. It was with this in mind that funding was made available for areas with concentrations of immigrants from the 'New Commonwealth' through Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 in the form of funds for the employment of additional local authority staff to cope with the challenges facing areas with new migrant populations (Young 1990, p. 24). Section 11 was used almost exclusively within schools and Local Educational Authorities (LEAs) indicating a recognition of the important role played by the education system in the shaping of society as a major site of intercultural contact between individuals in their formative years – a focus shared by the methodology of this research project.

Young (1990, p. 24) points out that neither Section 11 nor the new 'Urban Programme' launched by then Prime Minister Harold Wilson (targeting areas of immigrant concentration under the guise of areas of 'special social need') directly tied their funding to the interests of ethnic minority communities. In fact these funding streams were concerned as much with easing the presupposed burden upon the local population of the arrival of large numbers of immigrants – and preventing anti-immigrant sentiment – as they were with supporting immigrants in their process of settling and assimilating into their new surroundings, depicting members of minority ethnic groups as 'either generators of problems or as special needs groups' (Higgins et al. 1983, pp. 53-4). The 1968 Home Office circular on the Urban

Programme concluded that: 'a substantial degree of immigrant settlement would ... be an important factor, though not the only factor, in defining the existence of special need' (quoted in Higgins et al. 1983, pp. 52 and 54). The Urban Programme represented Wilson's response to fears about racial tensions in British cities articulated by the series of speeches made in 1968 by Enoch Powell (at the time a prominent right wing Conservative politician) who feared that the UK's inner cities would be transformed into 'alien territories' and prophesied significant violent conflict along racial lines in his now infamous 'rivers of blood' speech (Cochrane 2007, p. 27). The overwhelming concentration of BME populations in inner city areas meant that it was possible to use terms like 'urban deprivation' and 'community' in describing the issues in question and thus avoid any direct reference to the 'provision of additional services or targeted resources to black or immigrant communities' (Cochrane 2007, p. 28).

It is clear then from the examples given that early thinking around strategies for addressing the UK's increasingly multiculturally constituted communities were focused around an 'assimilation expectation', the idea that it was both in their own best interests, as well as for the 'common good', for immigrants to disassociate themselves eventually from their heritage and cultural backgrounds and adopt 'British' values and identities. Early assimilationist approaches focused upon achieving and maintaining an inclusive notion of national citizenship intended to encompass all members of society. Relying on a notion of 'colour(and culture)-blindness' the idea was that social harmony would be achieved by the expectation that all members of society would conform and assimilate to dominant mainstream

identities, norms and practices, that it would be sufficient to simply outlaw discrimination without the need for any specifically targeted policies (Modood 1997, p. 358).

In practice, however, these approaches failed to deliver a truly 'colour-blind' approach since the expectation was for new migrants to adopt mainstream 'White British' cultural norms. They failed to recognise the variety of diverse experiences and backgrounds which existed in British society. They also failed to offer an equality of treatment for all, evidenced by heightened tensions between minority migrant groups and the white working classes, the emergence of Powellism, far-right ideology and various racist and fascist groups such as the National Front and the subsequent rise of racially-motivated violence culminating in urban riots, such as those which took place in Notting Hill in 1958. One response to these development and to the claims for recognition increasingly being made by the new migrants and their children now being brought up in Britain's cities is to be found in the arrival in the late 1960s and early 1970s of more liberal 'multiculturalist' policy approaches within urban local authorities across the UK.

### **3.3 Multicultural policy-making**

In contrast to earlier approaches to rapid immigration in the 1950s and 1960s which championed the cultural assimilation and civic conformity of ethnic minority immigrant groups, the new 'multiculturalist' policies emerging in the late 1960s and early 1970s were typically more concerned with acknowledging and celebrating the different cultures of members of different minority ethnic groups. Multicultural

policies sought recognition and representation for all ethnic minority groups, unlike earlier approaches which identified individuals simply as either 'white' or 'non-white', also more positively reflected in the notion of a shared 'political' blackness between Black Caribbean and Asian immigrants (later much maligned – see Modood 2005, p. 29).

The multicultural approach of seeking to recognise, understand and celebrate all cultures in society is intended to demonstrate the freedom of each individual to identify with whatever ethnic, religious, or cultural group they choose and to acknowledge the wider social benefits of the diversity possessed (in this case for a more cosmopolitan UK). The idea is that once individuals feel confident and secure in their own identity and culture, and are aware of and understand those of others, they will be more 'tolerant' and accepting of difference, and therefore more likely to get on with (or cohere) with each other. Examples of the types of activity and approaches involved in 'celebrating cultures' include local authority support for the cultural and religious festivals of minority groups such as Eid or Diwali and the inclusion within the national curriculum of an explicit acceptance of the positive value of the presence of other cultures within the country.

Originating as an official national policy in Canada in 1971 (and later Australia in 1973) multicultural policies were adopted by local authorities in the United Kingdom from the early 1970s and 1980s onwards but (unlike Canada, Australia and many other European Union member states) were never adopted as an official national policy. Nevertheless there was a marked shift towards an engagement with multiculturally focused approaches to policy making, again, as with

the previous approach, most notably in the field of education, but also other areas such as the health service and in the proliferation of language provision and translation programmes.

In 1969 the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration produced a report entitled *The problems of coloured school leavers* and in 1977 the government produced the Green Paper *Education in schools: a consultative document* which stated that: 'Our country is a multi-cultural, multi-racial one, and the curriculum should reflect a sympathetic understanding of the different cultures and races that now make up society'. This statement is significant in that, while not adopted as an official national policy, it acknowledges explicitly (at least within the field of education) the 'multi-cultural' and 'multi-racial' status of the United Kingdom and the importance of an education system which values these principles. Later in 1977 there was another Select Committee report, this time titled simply 'The West Indian Community' which highlighted concern over the poor educational performance of children of West Indian origin within British schools. Largely as a result of the findings of this report a committee was established in 1979 whose findings were later published titled 'Education for All', widely known as the Swann Report (1985, p. vii), with the following terms of reference:

Recognising the contribution of schools in preparing all pupils for life in a society which is both multi-racial and culturally diverse, the Committee is required to:

- review in relation to schools the educational needs and attainments of children from ethnic minority groups taking account, as necessary, of



factors outside the formal education system relevant to school performance, including influences in early childhood and prospects for school leavers;

- consider the potential value of instituting arrangements for keeping under review the educational performance of different ethnic minority groups, and what those arrangements might be;
- consider the most effective use of resources for these purposes; and to make recommendations.

The Swann Report (1985) argued, among other things, for a 'multi-cultural' focus to the school curriculum for pupils of all backgrounds. It believed that this would, in turn, create a fairer and more just society where different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds would be viewed positively. The Report discussed at length the responsibility of schools for ensuring that all students acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to function as individual citizens within the wider society in which they live, noting that within the UK the wider society was multicultural in nature and therefore the ethos of the schools must necessarily reflect and reinforce this fact. Again, as with the sole use of Section 11 funding in education (noted in the previous section), the acknowledgment of the important role played by schools in reflecting and reinforcing the nature of wider society supports the decision of this research to focus on schools as key sites of community construction.

The following passage taken from the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association (AMMA 1983) (and used within the Swann Report) emphasises the responsibility which the Swann Report (1985, p. 319) attributes to the field of education in facilitating a successful multicultural society:

Pupils from all backgrounds will one day be voting, decision-making citizens whose views will influence public policies which affect people of all cultural backgrounds. All will contribute to the values of society. It is therefore important that all are made aware of the multi-cultural nature of British society today, and are encouraged in the attitudes of mutual knowledge and toleration which alone can make such a multi-cultural society a fair and successful one.

A more detailed assessment of the role of schools as one of the key sites in the process of 'making citizens', as well as an acknowledgement of how this discussion of 'citizenship education' has persisted, transformed and progressed, takes place in the next section. It is also worth reiterating here that schools were identified by this research as important sites of potential intercultural contact, exchange and community well-being. The research focused on the role of schools in working to create 'community-ness' in Research Question Three, addressed in detail in Chapter Five.

The main criticism levied at multiculturalist policies was that they did not do enough to tackle disadvantage caused by racial discrimination. Some educationalists felt that the multicultural approach was irrelevant within the context of their relatively mono-cultural schools (although it was noted even at this early stage that

this was 'becoming less prevalent as more parts of the country find themselves with ethnic minority populations as a result of increased mobility' (AMMA 1983, p. 8). Others even completely rejected the multicultural curriculum as irrelevant to eradicating racism (see AMMA 1983, p. 6).

Prior to the publication of the Swann Report (1985) urban riots in 1981 and 1985 had already pushed the issue of race explicitly back onto the agenda, particularly following the publication of the Scarman Report (1981) into the 1981 Brixton riots. The then Home Secretary William (later Lord) Whitelaw appointed Lord Leslie Scarman to hold a 'local inquiry' with terms of reference 'to inquire urgently into the serious disorder in Brixton on 10-12 April 1981 and to report, with the power to make recommendations'. Published on the 25<sup>th</sup> November the same year, the Scarman Report (1981) found that 'complex political, social and economic factors' had created a 'disposition towards violent protest' among predominantly young African-Caribbean men. Specifically, that the conditions in Brixton were characterised by economic and social decline and within the context of a national recession, unemployment was being experienced disproportionately by black young people (approximately half of whom were estimated to be unemployed in Brixton at the time).

Lord Scarman held the view that '...racial disadvantage [was] a fact of current British life...' and that '... urgent action [was] needed if it is not to become an endemic, ineradicable disease threatening the very survival of our society'. He was critical of the lack of a coordinated policy to tackle social and economic disadvantage and inequality and advocated 'direct co-ordinated attack on racial disadvantage'

through a practice of positive discrimination in favour of the UK's ethnic minorities. The report also noted the collapse of liaison arrangements between the police, local communities and the local authority prior to the disturbances and found evidence of a deep mistrust of the police and their methods by members of the local community. Recommendations included; changes in officer training and a review of inner-city policing methods; reform of the police complaints procedure; the recruitment of more police officers from ethnic minority backgrounds and the need for a change of attitude towards ethnic minority groups and issues of racism both within government and wider society. In that sense its conclusions fitted well into the growing multicultural consensus, because of the way in which they stressed the need to acknowledge the specificities of ethnic difference in the inner cities and the need to work with different communities rather than seeking to get them to conform to some other way of living.

The Scarman Report (1981) called for an increase in the active involvement and support of the local community in local policing practices, and the need for a shift to a practice of 'policing by consultation'. Scarman (1981) concluded that it was essential that 'people are encouraged to secure a stake in, feel a pride in, and have a sense of responsibility for their own area'. This sentiment echoes discussion within Chapter Two of this thesis around attachment to place as well as attempts (discussed in more detail in the next section of this chapter) within the community cohesion agenda to emphasise an attachment to 'communities' linked to geographic area. The absence of any meaningful dialogue between the police force and the publics it served was noted by the report to be a significant contributing factor to the urban

unrest which took place in Brixton. In other words, Scarman identified a failure to engage with the implications of multicultural difference and – as a consequence – it was argued that the police needed to learn to work more closely with the (many) communities on whose co-operation they depended. Unlike several other reports into facets of the UK experience of multiculturalism and multicultural policy-making, the findings of the Scarman Report (1981) were largely welcomed by the government.

The riots of 1981 in Brixton, Handsworth, Chapeltown and Toxteth served to emphasise the existence of persistent structural inequalities, disadvantage and racial discrimination experienced by immigrant and ethnic minority populations and helped to feed into attempts to develop more proactive approaches to tackling issues of racism both within government and wider society. For a time, policy approaches to the increasing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of the early 1980s began to place a greater focus upon anti-racism, looking for methods of tackling the inequality and disadvantage suffered in the spheres of housing, employment, education and urban planning by immigrant minority groups from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean as a result of racial discrimination. Anti-racist approaches were both formal (institutionally-based within Labour local authorities) and informal (mass movements such as Rock Against Racism and the Anti-Nazi League) and came as a response to (among other things) the entrenched racism, inequality and assimilationist notions of citizenship and national identity which existed during the 1950s, '60s and '70s (Gilroy 1987, p. 148). The principle issue was how to combat the disadvantage experienced by settling minority groups.

These approaches in turn came under heavy criticism within the Macdonald Report (1989) into the murder of 13 year old Ahmed Iqbal Ullah in the playground at Burnage High School in Manchester on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1986. The report into the circumstances surrounding the murder was highly critical of the school's implementation of what it saw as 'symbolic' or 'moral' anti-racism. It concluded that the approach to anti-racism at Burnage High School was fatally flawed since, while the school correctly identified Black and Asian students as the victims of discrimination by white students, it unfairly treated all white students as 'racist' and failed to acknowledge the existence of institutional racism and the complexities of human relations with regards to issues of class, sex, age or size of those involved. The Macdonald Report (1989) nevertheless positioned itself within the broad multiculturalist consensus. It acknowledged the need for the work of all schools to 'be informed by a policy that recognises the pernicious and all-pervasive nature of racism in the lives of students, teachers and parents, black and white and the need to confront it'. It was essential, it was argued, that racial disadvantage should be recognised as a 'multi-dimensional condition that sometimes requires positive, targeted policies if a level playing-field is to be created' (Modood 1997, p. 358). But this was also a moment in which it became possible to move beyond understandings which simply positioned ethnic minorities as victims of racism, instead (in policy terms) beginning to acknowledge the importance of their own agency, the ways in which people and communities defined themselves, organised their lives and sought to position themselves in a sometimes hostile world (Modood 1997, p. 358).

The high point of multiculturalism as a political argument was also already the moment at which it began to be most seriously challenged. At the time of its publication *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* also known as the Parekh Report (Parekh 2000b) was heavily criticised by the tabloid media for being perceived to attack the concept of what it is to be 'British'. The result of a commission established by an independent think-tank interested in countering racial discrimination and disadvantage in the UK more generally, the report (Parekh 2000b) recommended that the UK be formally recognised as 'multicultural' in the same way as Australia and Canada and declared that the notion of 'Britishness' must be revisited to make it more accessible to ethnic minorities (see McLaughlin and Neal 2004). The Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (Parekh 2000, p. 95) believed a move to a 'human rights culture' would provide the framework of the 'ethical code' necessary for negotiating difference and balancing the rights of one individual against those of another. Although new positive concepts of inclusive citizenship are desirable to policy-makers aiming to foster harmonious social relations and shared identities, Modood (2007b) contends that 'national identity is not reducible to a list but instead should be woven in debate and discussion'.

Multiculturalist approaches to public policy came under further intense criticism following the riots which took place in the UK's northern towns in 2001 as some argued that multiculturalism had served to divide society along racial, ethnic and religious lines. The reports (as discussed below) which emerged after the disturbances identified residential segregation and what they saw as the 'parallel lives' of different ethnic groups within each locality as leading to a lack of social and

'community cohesion' which was ultimately responsible for the rioting which took place. Essentially charging that focusing on respecting and celebrating the differences between self-identified groups or communities had resulted in a neglect of emphasis on similarities and common bonds shared by all. For Kundnani (2002) this shift marked the 'death of multiculturalism' and at the same time the rejection of cultural pluralism, resulting in a return to a version of the assimilationist approaches of the 1960s, albeit in a slightly different form.

### **3.4 Returning to assimilation? Community cohesion, citizenship and social integration**

'Community cohesion' emerged as a popular term in British public policy discourse after a series of reports in 2001 into the inter-ethnic disturbances in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley (Cantle 2001; Clarke 2001; Denham 2001; Ouseley 2001; Ritchie 2001) identified, among other things, a lack of clear political, community and religious leadership and a climate of ignorance, fear and division between different racial, ethnic and religious groups living in each area. The reports had different origins but were all borne out of a concern over the state of racial and ethnic relations and attributed these concerns to the perceived problems of segregation, cultural isolation and a lack of what Cantle (2001) defined as 'community cohesion' between different ethnic groups, most notably young Muslim and white working class men. Collectively the reports concluded that these and other factors were responsible for creating high levels of ethnic segregation and 'parallel lives' between different ethnic groups and communities in the local populations which led to the unrest.



Community cohesion as a public policy approach relies heavily upon the related theories of community and social capital introduced in Chapter Two. It is principally concerned with minimising disorder and based around the belief that a rise in activities that increase 'bridging' social capital between different ethnic groups will break down perceived barriers between communities and unite people around shared senses of belonging regardless of race, culture or faith. While community cohesion policy has been influenced in some ways by all of the earlier approaches it arguably shares the most with the early assimilationist policies of the 1960s.

A response to the perceived failures of more liberal multiculturalist approaches with the aim of limiting the development of what was seen as excessive 'bonding' social capital within (particularly ethnic minority or migrant) communities in favour of 'bridging' social capital between them and wider society (via voluntary associations and interactions), cohesion policy focused on emphasising commonalities and downplaying perceived difference with the goal of achieving integrated and cohesive communities based on wider geographical areas rather than 'belonging' associated with ethnic, religious or cultural groupings. Unlike earlier assimilationist policies cohesion policy does incorporate a level of 'respect' for different minority cultures and communities, evidence of traces of multiculturalist thinking. However, in community cohesion policy there is a notable shift in emphasis from recognising and celebrating difference between cultures and groups towards encouraging meaningful intercultural contact between different individuals and groups – an emphasis on the 'bridging' rather than the problematised excessive

'bonding' forms of social capital within community cohesion approaches (Putnam 2003).

For example, the Cattle Report (2001, p. 15, 60) championed teaching pupils about different religions and cultures, holding street celebrations for festivals of all faiths, 'Councils overtly exploring and celebrating their communities' diversity', even tours such as the 'Hope Not Hate Tour' which visited twenty local areas across the nation celebrating local communities, traditions and cultures using steel bands, brass bands and a mothers and toddlers group to honour the different regional, ethnic and religious elements of the UK. In some senses community cohesion represents an attempt to marry together the 'bridging' or 'coming together' associated with assimilationist (or at least integrationist) expectations with the 'bonding' and valuing of cultural diversity characteristic of existing multiculturalist approaches, albeit with a slant towards the former.

This section assesses the notion of 'community cohesion' as it is understood from a comparative review of several key policy reports namely; Cattle (2001) 'Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team'; Clarke (2001) 'Burnley speaks, who listens?', Denham (2001) 'Building Cohesive Communities: A Report of the Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion'; Ouseley (2001) 'Community Pride Not Prejudice: Making Diversity Work in Bradford'; Ritchie (2001) 'One Oldham, one future'; Cattle (2004) 'The End of Parallel Lives? The Report of the Community Cohesion Panel'; and the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) *Our Shared Futures*.

The tones of the early reports are indicative of their origins. The Ouseley Report (2001) into Bradford, the Ritchie Report (2001) into Oldham and the Clarke Report (2001) into Burnley were established locally (and in the case of Ouseley prior to the disturbances taking place) whereas the Denham (2001) and Cattle (2001) reports were established by central government as an attempt to understand the causes of the disturbances more broadly. As a result the Denham (2001) and Cattle (2001) reports contain national-scale recommendations, having based their findings on visits to many different sites, while the other three reports focus on their specific localities. Yet, despite these differences, and the fact that the concept of 'community cohesion' was only introduced by Cattle (2001) and not used explicitly by any of the reports established locally, there was a great deal of common ground between the terms of reference, findings and recommendations of each report.

The Ouseley Report (2001) was tasked with establishing why community fragmentation along social, cultural, ethnic and religious lines was occurring in the Bradford District. It was expected to offer advice on best practice to achieve an end to racial discrimination, promote equality for all 'racial groups' and to improve race and community relations for all 'Bradfordians'. One of the report's most significant findings was of a 'polarisation' of young people along racial, ethnic and religious lines and what it termed a 'virtual apartheid' in many local secondary schools (Ouseley 2001, p. 13). As such it placed a great deal of emphasis in its recommendations on embracing the theme of citizenship in schools:

Given the polarisation, self-segregation and 'white flight' associated with the District's schools, it is crucial that the key issue of teaching and learning about the District's culturally diverse population be addressed in all schools. The

continued ignorance about cultural diversity among the school students across all communities must be ended. This is a major knowledge deficiency... it deprives young people of social interaction and personal development... (Ouseley 2001, p. 27).

The importance of young people learning about 'diversity and the need to respect people from all backgrounds' was viewed as crucial to repairing the fragmentation which had occurred in Bradford (Ouseley 2001, p. 3). The Ouseley Report (2001) was one of several of the reports which identified in its early stages a phenomenon of 'self-segregation' within local populations. Noting the impact of this process on polarising schools along ethnic lines and presenting significant challenges to bridging community divisions and fostering greater social harmony and cohesion district-wide the Ouseley Report (2001, p. 3) recommended '... immediate action to initiate change to end racial self-segregation and cultural divisiveness' and concluded that 'what is now desperately needed is a powerful unifying vision for the district and strong, political, municipal and community leadership'. The Ouseley Report talks of promoting a 'sense of pride in the District and its people' by referring to the collective people of Bradford as 'Bradfordians' and encourages the use of this term and the single common identity it implies, despite noting that most people outside the City of Bradford in the surrounding towns and villages were reluctant to share any association with Bradford as an identity. The invocation of local people to feel a sense of pride in their local area echoes earlier recommendations made by Scarman (1981) after the Brixton riots. This type of thinking demonstrates a pattern within public policy on issues of race and multiculturalism which identifies notions of

community as both the problem and the solution to social disharmony. Evidencing a point made in Chapter Two, in the interests of preventing violent conflict between different groups or 'communities of belonging' in a locality, alternative forms of community – based around geographies of neighbourhood, town, region or nation – which unite groups between which there have previously been division are put forward as the solution. The implicitly homogenising nature of this process is what prompted writers such as Kundnani (2002) to see the community cohesion agenda as marking the end of a period of acceptance for cultural pluralism.

The Ritchie Report (2001, p. 4) into the disturbances in Oldham also noted the phenomenon of 'self-segregation' and was clear that '... The fact that it is mainly self-segregation makes the task (of tackling social divisions) all the more challenging'. Like the Ouseley Report (2001) it sought to promote a sense of shared collective identity in aiming to build a future '... in which all its inhabitants, when they ask themselves the question 'Who am I?' will put 'an Oldhamer' very high up their list of answers and be proud to do so' (Ritchie 2001, p. 4). Also, as with Ouseley, the Ritchie Report (2001, p. 3) acknowledged an important youth dimension to 'building a better, more united Oldham' running through every chapter of the report and warned of the consequences of failing to address the 'system of separate development within the town, in which people from different ethnic backgrounds live lives largely separated from one another'.

Presenting the findings of the Burnley Task Force originally established to investigate the disturbances in Burnley from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> June 2001 and identify the causes, the Clarke Report (2001) noted the immediate causes (and proposed immediate solutions) but also drew attention to long-term, underlying reasons and

sought long-term solutions to prevent the build-up of tensions between communities. The origins of the Burnley Task Force were different to all of the other reports as it was set up on a voluntary basis, drawing all of its members from the local area apart from the Independent Chair, in contrast to all of the other reports which were all established by either local or national government. The key issues which were identified to the Task Force and presented in the Clarke Report (2001) were very similar to those of other areas, as well as those of the Denham (2001) and Cattle (2001) Reports. Issues identified included Asian and white communities living 'separate and parallel lives', segregated neighbourhoods creating segregated schools preventing even young people from interacting with those from different cultures, that many members of the local white population held perceptions of unfair local authority funding practices disproportionately benefiting Asian communities and a lack of leadership, vision and civic pride in both Asian and white communities. Among its recommendations were better practices of information and communication regarding funding to different neighbourhoods and ethnic minority communities, more engagement with women and young people, a review of the system for allocating school places and the need to tackle issues of race and culture at primary school level to avoid some of the deeply entrenched view expressed by young children consulted as well as exchange visits between different youth centres so that young people from different communities could mix.

Government funding practices are acknowledged to have a major impact on the relationships between individuals and groups in a locality. Several key community cohesion reports criticised what they saw as irresponsible funding

practices that were perceived to play a major role in failing to 'incorporate specific objectives and programmes to create and sustain social and cultural interaction and integration' and splitting society into what were described as an endless array of identifiable groups creating antagonisms between minority groups forced to compete against each other for increasingly scarce resources (Ouseley 2001, p. 17). Where community cohesion reports differ from multicultural policies on the issue of funding is in their argument that the real issue is not support for the free expression or celebration of different cultures, but the fair and equal distribution of local resources with an emphasis, where possible, on projects or organisations which provide services, activities or facilities to all, while fostering dialogue and exchange between groups within that area. The potentially damaging effect of government funding on community cohesion was identified early on in the policy context by all of the reports. In Bradford, one of Ouseley's (2001, p. 17) key findings was that 'Funding regimes and partnerships have failed to incorporate specific objectives and programmes to create and sustain social and cultural interaction and integration'. In Oldham, Ritchie (2001, p. 11) found '...resentment in white areas that Asian communities in Glodwick and Westwood seemed to be favoured for improvement grants at the expense of areas like Sholver and Chadderton'. In Burnley, Clarke (2001, p. 7) found 'that many white people resent what they see as preferential treatment of Asian communities and neighbourhoods and that the Council has been poor at providing information and explanations about its funding decisions'. The Cattle Report (2001) noted that Single Group Funding (SGF) had tended to reinforce cultural differences and recommended that:

Funding bodies should presume against separate funding for distinct communities, and require collaborative working, save for those circumstances where the need for funding is genuinely only evident in one section of the community and can only be provided separately (Cantle 2001, p. 37).

Some uncertainty exists within policy reports around the question of when SGF is useful in supporting newly arrived communities to develop skills, maintain their cultural values and build capacity, and when it is counterproductive, divisive and detrimental to cohesion. Also, there appears to be confusion in many local areas between policy recommendations which support the respect of different cultures (which would conceivably involve some SGF) and those which champion collaborative working across thematic areas such as 'tackling drugs, achievement through sports and arts programmes, and literacy and basic skills development – across all communities' (Cantle 2001, p. 27). In fact, the second Cantle Report (2004) acknowledged that while policy advocates SGF be redirected to encourage cohesion in communities in the long term 'there is some evidence funders continue to fund these [SGF] projects for longer than necessary and that this can perpetuate segregation and isolation' (Cantle 2004, p. 50).

The Denham Report (2001) on the findings of the 'Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion' serves to bring the findings of all of the preceding reports together in order to set out the action already taken in various parts of the country and to establish actions for national government. The central recommendation of the report is that community cohesion be made a central aim of national government, ensuring that this is reflected in the delivery of all national



government policy. It echoes calls from Clarke (2001), Ritchie (2001), Ouseley (2001) and Cattle (2001) to promote common rights and responsibilities around citizenship in order to encourage intercultural dialogue and understanding.

Established by Ruth Kelly, then Communities Secretary, in June 2006 as part of the government's development of the community cohesion agenda and partly in response to the 2005 7/7 terror attacks on the London Underground the Commission on Integration and Cohesion published its findings in the *Our Shared Futures* report in 2007. The Communities and Local Government website outlined the mandate of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion as being to reflect on 'how local areas can make the most of the benefits delivered by increasing diversity – [as well as to] consider how they can respond to the tensions it can sometimes cause' and was expected to 'develop practical approaches that build communities' own capacity to prevent problems, including those caused by segregation and the dissemination of extremist ideologies'.

*Our Shared Futures* (COIC 2007, p. 57), in contrast to earlier reports outlined above, suggested that while segregation was an important issue in some areas it was decidedly less so in others, emphasising that 'national debates on integration and cohesion should not be boiled down to one specific issue'. The Chair of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (Darra Singh) summed up this stance well in his foreword referring to the now infamous 'sleepwalking into segregation' comments made by Trevor Phillips (then Chair of the now defunct Commission for Racial Equality) when he stated that: 'Excessive coverage about residential segregation ... serves to spread a view that the whole of England is spatially

segregated. It overstates and oversimplifies the problem and leaves us 'sleepwalking into simplicity'. The realisation that cohesion takes 'different forms in different areas' and is constituted of a 'complex interlocking of local factors' highlights the shift in the *Our Shared Futures* approach to cohesion (COIC 2007, p. 57).

The *Our Shared Futures* report (COIC 2007) moves away from one-size fits all national level solutions, instead valuing the specificity of 'place' in generating a sense of cohesion. It recommends achieving this via locally tailored solutions and an acknowledgement of the significance of 'millions of small, everyday actions' (and interactions) between people through which local communities can either be improved or harmed, reminiscent of the discussion presented in Chapter Two of 'conviviality' and 'everyday multicultural' (COIC 2007, p.4). The report proposes four key principles to a new understanding of integration and cohesion. First, it makes recommendations around the promotion of 'shared futures' emphasising what 'binds communities together rather than what differences divide them', marking a further move away from the explicit value of and respect for cultural diversity which persisted within earlier cohesion reports (COIC 2007, p. 44). Second, it makes recommendations around a new model of rights and responsibilities which focuses on strengthening a national sense of citizenship. Third, it makes recommendations around a principle of mutual respect and civility, recognising that the 'pace of change across the country reconfigures local communities rapidly' (COIC 2007, p. 43). Finally, it makes recommendations around the principle of visible social justice in order to tackle myths and build trust in the institutions that arbitrate between groups such as local authorities.

The crux of the issue of community funding practices remained a prominent element of the *Our Shared Futures* report produced by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) due, among other reasons, to an earlier ambiguity arising in Cattle (2004, p. 50) where it was stated that 'funding for the cultural and linguistic heritage of ethnic and culturally distinct groups' may be an exception to the rule on SGF. The *Our Shared Futures* (COIC 2007, p. 161) report attributed the persistence of Single Group Funding (SGF) to three main factors. First, that discrimination from mainstream providers had caused many groups to split off to 'engage in 'bonding activities' by themselves' (echoing the social capital principles discussed in Chapter Two). This was shown in the report to be particularly true of BME communities. Second, many groups continue to argue the need for culturally specific and appropriate services which they believe can only be provided from within (the report recommends that such cases be carefully evaluated and mainstreamed where possible). Third, the pre-existence of SGF had 'set a precedent for others to be funded in similar ways' and therefore once funding had been given to one group it was problematic not to do so for all and equally difficult to break off the relationship (COIC 2007, p. 161). Thus the incentive remains for each community to emphasise their difference in order to secure SGF, undermining the intended cross-culturally co-ordinated approaches to social justice, the disadvantages of which were reiterated in *Our Shared Futures* (COIC 2007, pp. 161-162) such as 'its potential to increase insularity and a sense of separation where the project funded is only or mainly for the group in question'.

The most significant strand of community cohesion policy is the emphasis placed on shared values, citizenship, and national identity. The thinking behind this is

that despite a vast range of identities and affiliations there is more that binds individuals in British society than divides them and that by focusing on (what are perceived to be) British values shared by all, segregation, ignorance and so-called 'parallel lives' will become less common (Cantle 2001, p. 9). This aspect of cohesion policy provides a link back to earlier debate presented in Chapter Two between the attitudes of Modood (2007a, p. 150), Gilroy (2004a, p. 108) and Parekh (2000a, p. 340) over the possibility of disconnecting national identities from strong forms of (often divisive) nationalism. There is a degree of consensus among the reports (Cantle 2001; 2004; COIC 2007) that the 'British (or English, Scottish and Welsh) identity should be celebrated', for example through citizenship ceremonies for new migrants and young people turning 18, citizenship education for all school pupils as part of the national curriculum and national days which aim to 'create a respect for the traditions and heritage of all citizens' (Cantle 2004, p. 8, 14). Locally focused reports like Ouseley (2001) and Ritchie (2001) have taken a similar approach but confined their support to strengthening local identities, as described earlier. There is also a level of agreement between the reports in calling for a set of core values that would guide the way people treat and expect to be treated by each other. The *Our Shared Futures* report articulates these more specifically with the examples of neighbourliness, civility, tolerance, freedom and equality (COIC 2007, p. 66, 86, 102).

Tensions can be observed in two aspects of this citizenship focus. The first relates to Cantle's (2001, p. 10) concept of citizenship which would 'place a higher value on cultural differences'. Taken at face value this statement appears to contradict, at least in part, the call for a set of core values that unite different groups

and individuals. Elsewhere Cantle (2001) suggests that emphasising the value of cultural differences and the celebration of cultures is likely to be divisive in many cases. There is, in other words, already within the reports an inherent danger both of being too assimilationist in approach and alienating minority communities (with whom a narrow definition of 'Britishness' does not resonate) or too pluralist (or multiculturally focused) and failing to create the shared values and bonds identified as desirable. The second aspect relates to the concept of 'citizens' used by all of the reports which broadly implies that all citizens, whether by birth or naturalised, need to be able to identify themselves as fundamentally (even culturally) British. The major tension related to this conception of citizens (and by default citizenship) is that it is unlikely to be effective in bridging the divide between different groups within society because of two main dynamics of contemporary migration. First, as a result of innovations in technology, migrants are able to communicate and travel easily and affordably between their place of residence and their country of origin (as noted in COIC 2007, p. 35). Second, migrants to the UK are increasingly arriving from (and via) new European countries and often do not wish or need to become citizens in the way that Cantle and others imagine. Migrants are no longer immersed in the culture of their new place of residence and cut off from ties to their country of origin as they were even when official attempts at assimilation were pursued in the 1960s.

While respecting cultures in the ways that Cantle (2001, 2004) and the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) recommend does provide a certain basic level of cross-cultural information, it is not clear how doing so will further the deconstruction of the rigidly defined groups which maintain the 'them' and 'us'

philosophy preventing truly high rates of 'cohesion' between individuals. All of the reports identify the pitfalls of unnecessary SGF within a locality; however ending such funding was not a straightforward task, and the push towards a set of core values and a re-imagining of 'Britishness' have also been shown to be problematic. These are issues that return in rather different forms in Chapter Five and Six, where the relationship between communities in place is more fully discussed.

Two noticeable absences from the recommendations of the policy reports reviewed are considerations of the role that deprivation and intercultural dialogue may play in influencing levels of cohesion. While the reports do not deny that deprivation may have an impact on levels of cohesion, very little attention is paid to it in their recommendations (Cantle 2001, p. 27; COIC 2007, p. 27). Fairclough (2001, p. 65) argues that: 'focusing on those who are excluded from society and coming up with ways to include them is a shift away from tackling inequalities ... and a presumption that there is nothing wrong with contemporary society'. The charge is that this approach is tackling the symptoms of so-called segregation and 'parallel lives' rather than the causes which include: lack of opportunity, institutional discrimination, and social inequalities. b:RAP (formerly Birmingham Race Action Partnership) (2004, p. 9) make the point that cohesion policy to date has potentially missed out on a key 'shared' experience of many within society, 'the extent to which white and BME communities (especially in the poorest 88 neighbourhood renewal areas) share an experience of disadvantage and inequality'. Indeed, Letki (2007, p. 1) concluded that there was no evidence to support current thinking on community cohesion that there was a breakdown of social connectedness in diverse

communities. Instead she found that economic inequality, deprivation and 'low neighbourhood status is the key element undermining all dimensions of social capital, while the eroding effect of racial diversity is limited' (Letki 2007, p. 23). Further study is needed into the relationship between deprivation and cohesion in areas of economic growth such as Milton Keynes, however anecdotal evidence of community conflict and low levels of community cohesion in the more deprived areas of the city such as Bletchley and the Lakes Estate would seem to support Letki's conclusions (Street Dreams 2006).

The preceding three sections have provided a broad overview of the trajectory of policy approaches to issues of race, community and multiculturalism in the United Kingdom from the early 1950s and 1960s until the present (2000s). The contemporary policy climate in the UK has become less focused on tackling social inequalities and is instead now dominated by strategies (with strong assimilationist undertones) primarily concerned with bringing individuals and groups from different cultural backgrounds together (such as community cohesion and citizenship testing) in the interests of avoiding conflict rather than addressing entrenched social disadvantage and inequality. The narrative of this chapter has highlighted the persistence of community and social capital discourse in the face of fragile and continually shifting approaches to public policy, concentrating most of its attention upon community cohesion initiatives since these were the context in which the fieldwork for this project took place.

If these various approaches have all in some way been responses to the challenges of living together (or apart) in a changing Britain, it is also important to

understand the ways in which they may be affected by shocks of a rather different sort, which apparently bear little relationship to the everyday lives of communities. Following the 7/7 bombings in London in 2005 emphasis shifted towards finding ways of directly challenging what was seen as extremism in particular – Muslim – communities. In some respects, the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) agenda can be seen as just another major policy initiative impacting on issues of race, community and multiculturalism in the UK today. But its primary focus on ‘extremism’ meant that its relationship to the wider community cohesion strategy into which it was introduced was uncertain and raised troubling questions. Its implementation by local agencies left them seeking to combine aspects of the different strategies in ways that were often creative and sometimes incoherent.

### **3.5 Preventing Violent Extremism while maintaining cohesion**

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) report, *Preventing Violent Extremism – winning hearts and minds* (DCLG 2007), was published primarily in response to the London bombings of 2005 and the increased government concern with preventing extremism and the proliferation of extremist ideology in the British Muslim community. The PVE or ‘Prevent’ arm constituted one of the four strands of the Home Office ‘CONTEST’ counter-terrorism strategy which was initially developed in 2003 (later revised in 2009) with the objective of reducing ‘the risk from international terrorism, so that people can go about their daily lives freely and with confidence’ (Home Office 2009). The four strands of CONTEST were ‘Pursue’ (to stop terrorist attacks), ‘Prevent’ (to stop people from becoming terrorist or supporting



violent extremism), 'Protect' (to strengthen protection against terrorist attack) and 'Prepare' (to mitigate against the impact of an attack where it cannot be stopped). While the other three strands constituted what would be described as a security response – coordinated and led largely by the Police and security services – the 'Prevent' strand was intended to be more community based, led by local authorities locally and guided by the DCLG. The Prevent strategy was articulated in the 'Winning hearts and minds' report as focusing on 'preventing individuals being attracted to violent extremism in the first place' and in enabling 'local communities ... to be able to challenge robustly the ideas of those extremists who seek to undermine our way of life' (DCLG 2007, p. 4). The PVE strategy stated that the building of 'strong communities' which are '... confident in themselves, open to others, and resilient to violent extremism' is a vital element of the approach, again demonstrating the use of notions of community in public-policy making (DCLG 2007, p. 4).

The DCLG and its strategic partners established four key approaches for implementing the strategy, namely; 'promoting shared values, supporting local solutions, building civic capacity and leadership, and strengthening the role of faith institutions and leaders' (DCLG 2007, p. 5). The implementation of the strategy around these four key approaches has included; citizenship education in supplementary schools and madrasahs, promoting faith understanding within the mainstream education system, listening to (and working with) schools and mosques as well as community and faith groups, partnerships between police and local authorities, and giving priority in support and funding decisions to those leadership

organisations actively working to tackle violent extremism and raising standards of governance in mosques (DCLG 2007, p. 5-10).

The PVE strategy borrowed heavily from community cohesion principles which emphasise the promotion of 'shared values' and the importance of bespoke local interventions and solutions. However it also came under widespread criticism for its sole focus on Muslims and the contradiction of pursuing a cohesion agenda – based around all groups and populations possessing a set of shared principles and values – while simultaneously identifying one of those populations (Muslims) as potentially dangerous (scapegoating and antagonising them in the process). Corresponding funding approaches to PVE (directed solely at Muslim groups and organisations) actually seemed to contradict government concerns about single group/identity funding (raised within community cohesion policy and outlined in the previous section) and led to the strategy being criticised as potentially divisive and counterproductive to efforts to foster high levels of community cohesion. The Communities and Local Government 'Committee on Preventing Violent Extremism' (House of Commons 2010, p. 3) agreed with the majority of the witnesses with whom they had consulted and concluded that:

Prevent risks undermining positive cross-cultural work on cohesion and capacity building to combat exclusion and alienation in many communities...

The single focus on Muslims in Prevent has been unhelpful. We conclude that any programme which focuses solely on one section of a community is stigmatising, potentially alienating, and fails to address the fact that no section of a population exists in isolation from others (House of Commons 2010, p. 3).

The claim made by central government that the Prevent strategy was 'communities-led' is worth interrogating as it relates back to the discussion around notions of community within Chapter Two (as well as the previous section of this chapter) which acknowledges the different conceptions of community, based on a variety of factors including geographical area, ethnicity and religious belief. In one sense the strategy was quite crudely 'communities-led' as it focused all of its attention on Muslim communities (with all of the pitfalls that follow this already mentioned above). However, Kundnani (2009, p. 12) points out that Prevent funding has not been driven by a decision-making process based on a need established by local authorities and agencies but instead has been dictated solely by the size of the Muslim population in the area. Chapter Five will return to the issue of the management of Prevent funding locally in the context of Milton Keynes where it was noted that policy-makers effectively found themselves forced to deal with a strategy which in many cases seemed outside of their remit, more suitable for the police and potentially counterproductive to their main body of work, but nonetheless attempted to use the money to further other agendas which could, at best, only loosely be interpreted as affecting Prevent objectives. PeaceMaker (an organisation concerned with 'promoting multicultural growth' through the focus on bringing young people from different backgrounds together), in giving evidence to the Communities and Local Government Committee: Preventing Violent Extremism, pointed out the clear confusion and lack of distinction between what constituted a 'Prevent' or a 'community cohesion' activity by noting that:

At delivery level, over 90 per cent of activities delivered as Prevent projects, of which we are aware, are nothing more than community cohesion projects delivered to Muslim communities and individuals. It seems that the only criteria for a project to be delivered under the Prevent agenda is that it work with Muslim people, regardless of the actual content of the delivery or the aims and outcomes of the project (House of Commons 2010, p. 59).

The result of the PVE funding practices described above has been additional funding being made available for one section of the population and not others (again, with all of the pitfalls that follow this mentioned above and in the previous section in the context of community cohesion discourse). In many cases participants in Kundnani's (2009) study and witnesses giving evidence to the 'Communities and Local Government Committee: Preventing Violent Extremism (House of Commons 2010)' suggested that, while initially progressive, cross-cultural/cross-community work was able to continue with the support of Prevent funding, the trend more recently has been to focus efforts on Muslims only, undermining the community cohesion agenda and the progress made at establishing cross-community relationships. Highlighting this point Kundnani (2009, p. 6) notes how his research found that local authorities were engaging with the very same 'community gatekeepers' around the Prevent agenda which the community cohesion agenda had identified as being problematic and divisive and not in the interests of commonality and the fostering of 'bridging' social capital. The issue of 'community gatekeepers' and local authority engagement practices is explored in more detail in Chapters Five and Six.

Issues of implementing a PVE agenda locally (in Milton Keynes) within the context of an on-going community cohesion agenda, including the extent to which interventions were shaped locally, will be addressed in Chapter Five as the research was able to speak to policy makers dealing with both of these agendas who were able to highlight some of the complexities and frustrations which they encountered. For now the relationship nationally remains fragile as, while the Communities and Local Government Committee acknowledges that 'violent extremism can emerge from even the most cohesive communities', there is still also a feeling that the more cohesive an area is the less likely it is that extremist messages will find support (House of Commons 2010, p. 56). Yet the presence of extremist ideology is seen as jeopardising community cohesion, and the Prevent agenda – while acknowledged by many to be counterproductive to cohesion – represented the response to that threat. The problem seemed to lie with the blurring of the line between counter-terrorism work targeted at individuals believed to be at risk of radicalisation and more general work to combat social exclusion in Muslim communities (see Travis 2010). The Communities and Local Government Committee report calls for a clearer distinction between the two and a focus of future counter-terrorism initiatives to reside with the police and security services. At the time of writing it remains unclear what, if any, initiatives have replaced the 'Prevent' arm of the governments counter terrorism agenda as it was observed during the fieldwork conducted for this research.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented an assessment of each of the three main policy 'moments' in the UK relating to the management of diverse and multicultural populations and groups, before considering the impact of an initiative (PVE) that seemed to arrive fully formed from outside. It has demonstrated the continually shifting and changing nature of policy in this area and charted the motivating factors for these transitions, from assimilationism as a response to large-scale commonwealth migration through to community cohesion as a response to urban unrest and perceived parallel lives between communities, noting how certain aspects of old approaches are jettisoned while others transform and are absorbed into or co-exist (un)easily with new strategies.

Despite the fragile and constantly changing and reshaping nature of multicultural policy-making outlined in this chapter, conceptions of community have remained present throughout all the approaches discussed to varying degrees. In the 1960s migrants and minority ethnic groups were expected to abandon their own cultures and assimilate into an all-encompassing notion of British national identity or community. In the 1970s there was a new recognition of the presence of multiculturalism and of a range of minority communities, cultures and identities, other communities and the benefits of this diversity to wider society. Approaches since 2001 recognise the existence of minority communities but place an increasing emphasis upon integration and the importance of common ground, shared values and a broader sense of inclusive community 'bridging' rather than exclusive 'bonding'. The persistence of an on-going community discourse throughout this

expansive policy spectrum reinforces the role of community as part of both the problem and the solution to issues of social division and disharmony on both local and national levels, evidenced in the discussion of PVE strategies which seek 'strong communities ... resilient to violent extremism' (DCLG 2007, p. 4).

It is clear that many aspects of recent community cohesion initiatives echo the assimilationist undertones of earlier approaches of the 1960s. Having reviewed the different approaches in depth it is clear that (often in times of crisis, moral panic or civil disturbance) challenges have continuously been made and difficult questions asked of policy approaches to issues of race and multiculturalism. There is a very real sense of contestation, debate and flux between various policy standpoints and approaches at certain times. This process of flux is far from linear in nature and, while it has been presented broadly sequentially for the purposes of this chapter, the three main approaches identified in this chapter have been adopted and avoided at numerous points and in a multitude of formations. This is a key point as it speaks to the reactive and uncertain nature of this policy arena and goes some way towards reinforcing the difficulties of locally implementing national objectives that are (re)shaped in this way. None of the approaches identified sit neatly between the lines of definition, in fact elements of each have bled, at various points (and continue to do so), into each other so that it has become impossible to distinguish absolute differences between assimilationist, anti-racist, multiculturalist or community cohesion policy approaches.

Links have been made at numerous points throughout this chapter to Chapter Five, which addresses the general policy issues in the specific local context of Milton

Keynes using evidence gathered from the research methods undertaken as part of this project. The cohesion agenda itself and PVE in particular have been developed in a context that assumes division and conflict within traditional urban areas. Yet they generalise from that base, suggesting that the experiences they describe (and to which they seek to develop responses) represent the norm. This thesis begins to question such assumptions, because it looks in other places for evidence, the new places of multicultural, and Milton Keynes in particular. The next chapter outlines the methods adopted in pursuing the research that underpins the thesis, highlighting the importance of researching issues of race, multicultural and community in new multicultural city spaces and the subsequent two Chapters, Five and Six, explore empirical findings gathered around the implementation of community cohesion policies within the local context of Milton Keynes in terms of the formation of both policies and communities.



## 4. Reflections on Method and Methodology

---

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an account of the design and methodological approaches taken during the course of this research and the factors and considerations affecting these choices. It is made up of three main sections. The first offers a background to the origins and design of the project and details the design as a multi-method case-study of Milton Keynes. It looks specifically at how and why the research approach, methods and participants were adopted and selected. The second provides a discussion of the research conducted, offering an introduction to the research participants and outlining the approaches taken and challenges encountered. The third offers a series of critical reflections and insights into the experience of conducting research into migrant communities and local policy-making in new city spaces. It looks specifically at insights into the experience of an ESRC CASE studentship between an academic institution and a local authority, lessons from the process of conducting social research into issues of multicultural, community and social inclusion within a new multicultural city space and the impact of a degree of 'insider status' afforded me based on my origins within the place of study.

### 4.2 Research design

The case for investigating issues of multicultural, community and social inclusion in the context of new city spaces (specifically Milton Keynes) was put forward in

Chapter One when the five main research questions and three broad aims of this study (of exploring the new geographies of multiculturalism which now exist within the UK identifying and understanding processes of community formation and settlement within new multicultural city spaces, and highlighting approaches to multicultural policy-making taken by these local authorities) were introduced, supported by local quantitative data which demonstrated the increasingly multicultural nature of the local communities in Milton Keynes. This case was further reinforced in Chapter Two by the focus of the majority of existing academic research interested in issues of race and place upon large urban areas with long-established (and often residentially polarised) communities, also through a valuing of the specificity of 'place' in national-level multicultural policy-making agendas in the push towards locally tailored solutions to achieving a sense of 'cohesion', presented in Chapter Three.

As a collaborative ESRC CASE studentship between the Open University and Milton Keynes Council the key areas of interest, along with the five main research questions presented in Chapter One, had been established prior to my involvement in the project as a result of an on-going dialogue between the supervisory team from the Open University and several senior figures within Milton Keynes Council. Throughout the project, and as a result of many factors including my pre-existing knowledge of Milton Keynes, my placement within the local authority and my interactions with local communities and policy-makers I was able to make the project my own. The result of this partnership was a project which offered a real opportunity to develop experience and an enhanced understanding of (as well as a bridging of the gap between) academic theory and policy practice. The collaborative nature of

this research dictated that it was expected to facilitate a two-way exchange of ideas and approaches between the two CASE partner organisations. It was also expected to be able to communicate effectively with academic, policy and community-based audiences, presenting a set of distinct challenges – but also opportunities – which will be elaborated upon later in Section 4.4 of this chapter. Even within the Open University itself the interdisciplinary nature of the project was clear as it cut across the Geography and Social Policy departments in its scope and in the fields of expertise of its research team drawn from the areas of Social Policy, International Development and Human Geography.

This studentship offered the prospect of gaining a more in depth understanding of relevant issues within both the academic and policy arenas. It was also a means through which to explore the trend of increasingly ethnically diverse communities within new urban spaces, in this case in my hometown (Milton Keynes), something I had experienced first-hand whilst growing up. Upon commencing the studentship I began to shape and develop (with the support of my supervisory team consisting of academics, policy-makers and practitioners across the course of the research) the original project brief and research questions. While undertaking a studentship which had, to a certain extent, already been designed did have its challenges, it also had (at least) one significant foreseeable benefit and appeal for a prospective student. By virtue of its collaborative nature it was acknowledged to be investigating areas of wider interest to both relevant academic audiences and local policy-makers, as well as the wider-communities themselves. The interdisciplinary and multifaceted nature of the research left scope for the project to be responsible

for affecting real change in approaches to local policy-making, in addition to the expectation of all doctoral research to constitute an original contribution to academic knowledge. The experience of conducting research as an ESRC CASE student is expanded upon in greater detail in Section 4.4 of this chapter.

This study seeks to look at the experiences, processes and policy responses to the settlement of two Black African migrant groups in Milton Keynes. This research adopts a case-study approach seeking an in-depth level of understanding and analysis of the experiences of two of Milton Keynes' migrant populations and the policy infrastructure in place to address the issues arising from its newly multicultural status. Like Rex and Moore (1967), this research assesses the impact of significant public-policy agendas and the role played by religious centres and community associations in the settlement and integration of migrant populations. It does so through a detailed level of analysis drawn from spending a significant amount of time immersed and actively researching in the field at the local level which would not have been possible solely via quantitative surveying or secondary census data, for example. Connolly (1998 in Connolly and Troyna 1998, p. 4) notes, for example, how statistical analyses found in the Swann Report (1985) were 'criticised for failing to identify and help understand the complex social processes and practices that led to these inequalities'. Also, demonstrated in Chapter Three, is how national policy reports into similar problems have also based their findings upon research conducted within specific localities (for example Cattle 2001, COIC 2007). Aspects of the approaches of those studies (discussed in Chapter Two) and policy reports (discussed in Chapter Three) share this project's interest in capturing both the lived experiences

of community and the policy environment in which that experience takes place. These studies and reports have broadly followed the qualitative place-based case-study approach of speaking to local people from members of specific communities, young people, religious and community leaders and policy-makers in order to establish a detailed insight of local circumstances. This historical trend supports the approaches of this project outlined here as set within the context of a long tradition of community studies. Framing the project as a case-study of the experiences and practices of Somali and Ghanaian migrants and local policy approaches to multiculturalism in Milton Keynes reflected the desire of the research to develop an enhanced understanding of multiculturally constituted communities and the processes of constructing local community identity and sentiment as it relates to contemporary 'cohesion' discourse in new urban spaces.

By way of a justification of the case-study approach it is helpful to refer to work by Vaughan (1992, in Ragin and Becker 1992, p. 175) who, in discussing the 'heuristics of case analysis' notes:

'Cases are chosen because (1) they are potential examples of research topic X, (2) they vary in size and complexity (e.g. groups, simple formal organizations, complex organizations, subunits within them, or networks, and (3) they vary in function (e.g. accounting department, church, environmentalist group, research institution, symphony orchestra) ... We treat each case independently of others, respecting its uniqueness so that the idiosyncratic details can maximize our theoretical insight. As the analysis proceeds, the guiding theoretical notions are assessed in the light of the findings'.

Countering some of the criticisms of case-study research as limited in 'comparative usefulness' (see Harper 1992 in Ragin and Becker 1992, p. 147), and valid cautions over attributing the opinions of case-study groups to a whole population (May 1997, p. 114), Ragin (1992 in Ragin and Becker 1992, p.217) posits that:

'... Whether it is viewed as given or socially constructed, the empirical world is limitless in its detail, complexity specificity, and uniqueness. The fact that we can make almost any everyday social category problematic (e.g., family, community, social class, church, firm, nation-state) is testimony to the complexity of the empirical. We make sense of its infinity by limiting it with our ideas'.

He later continues in support of case-studies or 'casing' by referring to it as:

'... An essential part of the process of producing theoretically structured descriptions of social life and of using empirical evidence to articulate theories. By limiting the empirical world in different ways, it is possible to connect it to theoretical ideas that are general, imprecise, but dynamic verbal statements' (Ragin 1992 in Ragin and Becker 1992, p.225).

In this case-study a multi-method qualitative approach combining document analysis, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observation was most able to effectively support the investigation of the aims, themes and research questions (outlined in Chapter One and reiterated briefly in the previous section). While the bulk of the research was to be in the form of semi-structured individual interviews, this would be preceded by analysis of local and national policy

frameworks and existing academic studies in other contexts and combined with several focus groups and 'moments' of participant observation.

The use of different methods and the different types of data which they produce in social research offers the opportunity to 'provide complementary information that illuminates different aspects of what we are saying... and also helps us to recognise the limits to what any particular type of data can provide' (Hammersley 2008, p. 31). This approach was also a necessity in many ways, due to the exploratory nature of research into issues of multicultural and community cohesion in new urban spaces. Erzberger and Kelle (2003, quoted in Hammersley 2008, p. 461) comment that: 'the use of different methods to investigate a certain domain of social reality can be compared with the examination of a physical object from two different viewpoints or angles. Both viewpoints provide different pictures of this object that might not be useful to validate each other but that might yield a fuller and more complete picture of the phenomenon concerned if brought together'. A good example of a multi-method approach similar to this study is Clayton (2006, p. 484) who used a 'series of semi-structured interviews, group discussions, informal conversations, photo diaries and participant observation in a number of youth-based settings over the course of one year'.

This project's focus upon issues of multicultural and cohesion in the context of previously un(der) studied new city spaces made it particularly well-suited to qualitative research (which allows for elements of interest to emerge gradually) since a lack of familiarity with the inner workings of local government and respective migrant associations dictated that it would only be possible to know of a fraction of

what I was seeking to understand in advance (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). The intention was that the detailed knowledge necessary for conducting this study would develop over time as I became immersed in the field. It was apparent from the outset that making use of the CASE partnership and other existing contacts in the area would be vital to ensuring an accurate impression of who it was worth speaking to, what I should look for and what questions I should ask. This process of learning about and from the field has been on-going since the beginning of the first year of the project and has already greatly improved the quality of the research. The nature of this study rendered any attempt to design all aspects of the research before collecting the data both impractical and undesirable, as the benefit of knowledge gained from the field would have been lost. The reflexivity of the approach detailed above allowed for techniques and approaches to emerge gradually as part of the research process itself and subsequently informed and improved the research going forward. Allen (2003, p. 11) identifies this process as one of 'reflection, revision and iteration'.

This qualitative approach allowed me to develop a more detailed description of the lived experience of multicultural in new city spaces. The nature of the study within a new area (both in terms of the age of the city and as a new site for research of this kind) was such that classifying and counting its features would not have offered the same rich understanding at this early stage. The focus was therefore placed firmly upon a subjective understanding of the interpretations of events from carefully selected groups and individuals, over any perceived objective precise measurement and analysis of target concepts. However this focus was preceded and



supplemented by a sustained process of document analysis of relevant policy strategies which are discussed in greater detail next.

## **Document Analysis**

Document analysis was conducted on national policy strategies in Chapter Three and local policy documents from the micro-level of Milton Keynes in Chapter Five. These documents had a significant influence on the approaches to multicultural policy making in Milton Keynes and so without conducting this analysis the fieldwork would have failed to fully appreciate the policy context shaping (and being shaped by) the environment in which the research was conducted. May (1997, p. 157) notes how documents have:

‘... The potential to inform and structure the decisions which people make on a daily and longer-term basis; they also constitute particular readings of social events’.

Yet, as Forster (1994, quoted in May 1997, p. 149, original emphasis) cautions:

‘They (documents) should never be taken at face-value. In other words, they must be regarded as information which is context-specific and as data which *must* be contextualized with other forms of research...

Documents, May (1997, p. 164) notes, ‘might be interesting for what they leave out, as well as what they contain’ and do not simply reflect but also ‘construct social reality and versions of events’. Complementarity of methods is therefore noted to be of fundamental importance.

Aside from the content of the documents themselves, observations from the field indicated that many of the reports and strategies looked at (such as the *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Strategy*) were the first of their kind within the city given the recent introduction of these theories on a national government scale as well as the very recent nature of the Council's approaches to issues relating to multiculturally constituted communities. This offered some context to the history and degree of experience which existed in addressing issues of multicultural and community cohesion within the city. There were in fact relatively few strategies in place on the local level, with my placement coming during the time that most were still in the process of being written, consulted upon and formally adopted. Again, my external supervisor and other helpful contacts within Milton Keynes Council were able to point me towards policies, strategies and reports that were relevant to my research as these were not always easy to locate.

### **Semi-structured interviews**

In order to illuminate policy making agendas on multicultural and community-building, as well as gain an insight into the experiences of the case study groups, a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with various key agencies and figures throughout the city. Semi-structured interviews would represent the method used to collect the bulk of the data for this research and would be conducted with Ghanaian and Somali community and religious leaders, educationalists, policy-makers, policy-practitioners and voluntary sector organisations.

Since this project aimed to speak to a wide variety of participants from a selection of backgrounds, including migrant community organisations, local

government departments and third sector organisations, it was vital that the research methods reflected this and allowed for unanticipated themes to emerge and be expanded upon (Lofland and Lofland 1994). Semi-structured interviews, as the key method of attitudinal research, provided an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the range of contributions each participant had to offer the project, from understanding the roles of schools and religious organisations within local communities to explaining Ghanaian and Somali migrant experiences within the city (Fielding and Thomas 2001). This type of research captures an 'insiders' view of a society in contrast to the more limited 'outsiders' perspective offered by the scientific/quantitative approach. Solomos and Back (1996, p. 214-215) also used semi-structured tape-recorded interviews to provide 'a core technique for eliciting accounts from councillors and political activists' while also speaking to community relations officers, members of the black voluntary sector and Birmingham City Council officers working within various service departments. Solomos and Back (1996, p. 216) also describe how the data gathered from these interviews was 'augmented with extended participant observation', which was also the case in this study and will be discussed next.

As stated previously the empirical focus of the research relates to Black African communities in Milton Keynes – and specifically to Ghanaian and Somali populations. I conducted semi-structured interviews with community leaders and heads of community organisations as well as the previously stated religious leaders from each community (as well as a wider snowball sample amongst other members

of the community) in order to get a better understanding of the settlement processes and community-making practices of their respective groups.

With this in mind, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with; key Milton Keynes Council figures based in the Youth Services, Community Development, Cohesion and Equality, Community Safety and Strategy and Regeneration teams. Key individuals from the voluntary sector bodies including Milton Keynes Racial Equality Council and Milton Keynes Council for Voluntary Organisations; key figures in institutions at the heart of local communities (such as head teachers, EMASS and EAL support staff, youth work practitioners located in community-based youth centres, religious leaders) and key figures in social organisations at the centre of specific migrant populations (such as the Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes and the Horn of Africa Welfare Association Milton Keynes).

### **Participant observation**

Participant observation offers the research insight into Council, local and migratory practices within the city taken from the everyday practices of community- and policy-making of interest to this project that would not be possible via any other method. While document analysis provides a level of understanding of the types of strategies that have been developed and semi-structured interviews and focus groups offer insight into the views and feelings of participants, conducting participant observation enables the researcher to witness first-hand the practices and behaviours of research participants and, in comparing and contrasting these observations from the data offered via other methods, develop a more well-rounded understanding of the areas of interest. May (1997, p. 132) discussing Bauman's (1992) notion of 'strolling' in

reference to the benefits of participant observation as a research methods notes that 'to 'stroll' is to listen, observe and experience and to expose theories and biographies to new and unfamiliar social settings and relations, with a view to enhancing an understanding of them'. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995, p. 124-5) see it as an almost inescapable process as they believe 'everyone is a participant observer, acquiring knowledge about the social world in the course of participating in it'.

As noted earlier in this section Hammersley (2008, p. 31) suggests combining methods provides the opportunity to test the results and findings generated by other methods and also provides complementary information. For example, the sustained period of participant observation conducted at the local authority (as the result of the CASE partnership which would see me based within different departments for one day per week for approximately two years) offered a greater level of insight into the policy-process than would have been available from the analysis of policy documents alone. Equally attending and observing migrant and local community events provided a greater context for understanding the ways in which Milton Keynes' multicultural populations came to be established than interviews with the leaders of community and third sector organisations. In his study of two areas of South London Back (1996, p. 253) collected ethnographic data based on both interviews and participant observation in local sites of interaction for young people in both areas, specifically two youth clubs, in order to fully explore the local experiences – a similar approach to that taken by this research in the context of Milton Keynes.

The process of undertaking participant observation was facilitated by the fact that I am a long-time resident of Milton Keynes and so I have some local knowledge and experience of the layout and demographics of the city. Nevertheless it remained important that I identify myself as a PhD student and explain the aims of my research during formal as well as informal interactions within the field. A more detailed review of my reflections on researching as a 'local' is presented later in Section 4.4.

Bourgois (1995, in Taylor 2002, p. 16) argues that participant observation is the most appropriate research technique available for documenting the lives of people on the margins of a society. He argues that such ethnographic techniques are better suited than exclusively quantitative methodologies because they enable the researcher to establish long-term relationships based on trust in order to facilitate the asking of potentially 'provocative personal questions' and to increase the likelihood of receiving 'thoughtful, serious answers' (Bourgois 1995 in Taylor 2002, p. 16). Since part of the focus of this research is on the community formation and relationships between two migrant groups (young people in particular) in newly multicultural communities in Milton Keynes, 'on the margins' can take many different forms. The extent to which different ethnic and migrant groups within Milton Keynes fall inside or outside of certain margins will be highlighted by the focus groups conducted with Ghanaian and Somali young people.

### **Focus groups**

Focus groups were chosen as the research aimed to foster free-flowing discussion conducive to gaining a detailed understanding of the experiences of migrant young

people in Milton Keynes. May (1997, p. 114, original emphasis) notes that: 'Group and individual interviews may produce *different* perspectives on the *same* issues', so again the triangulation method noted earlier by Hammersley (2008, p. 31) is of value. May (1997, p. 114) found that since a substantial proportion of our everyday lives are spent interacting with others, group interviews '...provide valuable insight into both social relations in general and the examination of processes into social dynamics in particular'.

Focus groups are also well suited to this research project as they are identified by Morgan (1988, p. 11) to be useful for, among other things, 'orienting one's self to a new field; generating hypotheses based on informant's insights ... evaluating different research sites or study populations ...', but principally that they enable the researcher to observe a large amount of interaction on a topic in a limited period of time and shift the emphasis away from the interaction between the researcher and the participant. The result is a greater emphasis on the participant's points of view. This 'participant-led' nature of focus groups minimises the role of the researcher in contrast to an individual interview and frees the research findings, to some degree at least, from any assumptions or pre-conceptions held by the researcher (see Neal and Walters 2006, p. 180). Participants are therefore able to reflect on the responses of others and assert their own experiences on 'topics that could be perceived as unfamiliar, emotive and complex' in a friendly environment (Farquhar 1999, p. 47).

In order to excavate notions of attachment, belonging and inclusion I planned to conduct a series of up to six focus groups with Ghanaian and Somali

young people drawn from congregations of religious centres, school populations, members of respective migrant social organisations and via snowball sampling of local Ghanaian and Somali residents in the city in order to garner a first-hand understanding of young people's experiences and opinions of Milton Keynes.

When attempting to understand notions of community and relations between different groups within a locality the extent to which experiences vary between individuals is likely to be particularly interesting. Levy (1979 in Morgan 1988, p. 18) states that 'hearing how participants respond to each other gives insight not just into their natural vocabulary on a topic, but also when they are willing to challenge others and how they respond to such challenges'. Focus groups offer this research the best possible opportunity for this exchange of experiences to be recorded and analysed. In using focus groups in social research it is important for the researcher to be aware of the way in which individual behaviour and decision making is subject to group influence, and therefore responses received must be viewed in this light (Janie 1982, in Morgan 1988, p. 21).

It was necessary to consider various factors prior to conducting my focus groups, such as the number of interviews, the length of interviews, the number of participants per group, the age of participants, the sources of participants, the sites of interviews, measures taken to encourage participation, the types of questions asked and the level of researcher involvement. The aim was to conduct up to six focus groups with young people, three with those from a Somali background and three from a Ghanaian background. By doing so the project would be offered the



opportunity to take into account the diversity of experiences within each group by drawing samples from a variety of different sources.

### **4.3 Doing the research**

The focus of the research on schools and provision for young people and religious centres as sites of local community construction reflected a number of factors: the age profiles of minority ethnic populations in the city; the concerns over both young people and religion in community cohesion agendas and the particular formal and informal roles that schools and religious centres.

In total twenty five semi-structured interviews were conducted with various key agencies and figures throughout the city, in order to illuminate policy making agendas on multicultural and community building as well as to gain an insight into the experiences of the case study groups (see Appendix A). Three of these interviews were conducted with participants for whom policy-making was their principle role, working in the fields of equality and community cohesion, community safety and ethnic minority achievement (in education). A further three interviews were conducted with individuals who spent the majority of their time on putting policies into practice, with one working in regeneration and two working in Community Development. Four of my participants were youth workers; two were responsible for specific geographical areas of the city while the other two had more general responsibilities. A further two of my participants were religious leaders, in both cases Ghanaian pastors in local churches. Three of my participants were community leaders, all were the Heads of community associations (two Somali and one

Ghanaian). Eight of my participants worked in schools; one was a head teacher, two were deputy head teachers, one was the head of Ethnic Minority Achievement Support in their school, one was the English as a Second Language (EAL) Coordinator who also took responsibility for Ethnic Minority Achievement, and three were Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Staff who were based in specific schools as a part of a service run by EMASS. Finally, two of my participants worked in the voluntary sector; one was the Chair of a local equalities organisation while the other was a community mobiliser.

The semi-structured interviews were complemented by participant observation at key Milton Keynes Council, local and migratory formal and informal community events, in order to witness first-hand how migrant communities, as well as the wider 'Milton Keynes community', organise and are formed. In order to maximise the CASE partnership with Milton Keynes Council I conducted a process of on-going participant observation while based in Milton Keynes Council one day a week. During this time I was invited to attend relevant meetings which allowed me to observe the processes of policy-making, discussion and strategy development in practice first-hand, enabling me to test and follow-up on research findings gathered from other research methods. I attended a number of city-wide community events such as the 'World Picnic Day' (which involved individuals preparing and bringing their own traditional food to share with each other) as well as various carnivals, parades and festivals which were open to all and aimed to bring all of Milton Keynes' residents together. Attending these events enabled me observe how relationships within the wider MK community are formed, encouraged and organised around local

events tailored to the local community in the widest possible sense. In order to witness for myself how migrant communities organise and are formed on the basis of a shared identity and culture within the city I attended events specific to the migrant community themselves. These observations aimed to yield particular insights into structures of community feeling within migrant groups and the extent to which inclusionary practices are present in everyday formal and informal settings. There was also on-going informal participant observation within Milton Keynes Council as a result of the CASE partnership which saw me based in their offices one day per week throughout the bulk of my first two years. I was able to develop relationships with members of staff and understand local policy-making processes first hand by attending meetings and witnessing discussions and consultation processes which had a direct impact upon the creation of local public policy. I also witnessed the ways in which issues of multiculturalism and cohesion were prioritised and tackled within Milton Keynes.

Finally, in order to gain a deeper understanding of notions of attachment, belonging and inclusion, five focus groups were conducted with young people from the case study groups, two Somali samples (four and six participants respectively) and three Ghanaian samples (six, seven and three participants respectively) were used (see Appendix B). These were chosen as they are 'participant-led' and more likely to foster free-flowing discussion and be more conducive to gaining a detailed understanding of the experiences of migrant young people (Neal and Walters 2006, p. 180).

The first interview took place on the 30<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and the last on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2009. Interviews were conducted in a variety of locations across the city including office buildings, schools, churches, youth clubs as well as participant's homes. They varied in length from forty minutes to two and a half hours, including several cases where follow-up interviews with the same participants were conducted to explore specific issues of interest or simply to finish the interview where time had run out or been cut short. All of the semi-structured and focus groups covered the questions of; perceptions of Milton Keynes as a 'multicultural' space; notions of what 'community' means in Milton Keynes; the effect of a 'new city' on how well people get on with each other; and involvement in local attempts to increase 'cohesion'. Other avenues were explored in greater depth depending on the position and experience of the participant (as well as their time constraints and willingness to participate).

As a result of the variety of different participants this project seeks to engage with it was necessary for more than one approach to be taken when identifying participants. For the purposes of this chapter I have broken the participants down into the categories of 'policy-makers, practitioners and youth workers', 'migrant groups, organisations and (religious) leaders', 'educationalists', 'voluntary sector workers' and 'young people' in order to present the ways in which each were identified and recruited. The first to be looked at by this chapter are policy-makers, practitioners and youth workers.

### **Policy-makers, practitioners and youth workers**

In the search for participants from the Council and other strategic bodies within the city, individuals were selected on the basis of the relevance of their roles to the project through a process of 'targeted selection'. The intention was to achieve a suitable blend of experienced decision makers responsible for strategic approaches and those involved in direct service delivery.

The partnership with Milton Keynes Council is addressed in greater detail in Section 4.4 but it is important to note here that it played a big role in helping to both identify and recruit research participants. Having familiarised myself with the organisation and made contacts with individuals working in departments with ties to my areas of interest I was able to develop a broad list of possible interview participants from within the Council. One useful tool for raising awareness of my research throughout the Council and for drumming up interest and participants amongst Council staff was a brief note which was added to the 'Tuesday Bulletin' which is an e-newsletter sent out to all Council staff every Tuesday. I received several emails of interest and offers of help from Ghanaians and Somalis working within the Council, as well as others working in relevant areas such as community cohesion and community safety, all willing to meet and discuss my research and offer their support in various forms. Another tool I found useful for identifying potential participants, following on from the Council Bulletin, was the Council email system itself, where I was able to search through Council staff alphabetically and highlight those with job titles which sounded relevant to my research, such as Social Inclusion Officer and the BME Community Development Officer. The benefit of this tool was, however, limited

at times as it was apparent that in many cases those who had experience or insight that would interest me had quite generic job titles which may not be immediately obvious during such a search. Also, job titles were themselves misleading at times and not always the best criteria with which to base the decision of whether or not it would be worth approaching the individual for an interview.

In fact, the way that I identified and recruited most of my participants within the Council was via snowball sampling and recommendations via key gatekeepers. The downside of being unable to successfully identify all participants for myself was that to a certain extent I was reliant upon others both understanding and supporting my research enough to recommend the most appropriate people for me to speak to. There was, therefore, also potential for my choice of participants to be unduly influenced by these gatekeepers – especially as each gatekeeper only knew of, and had experience in, specific areas of interest to my study and therefore no single gatekeeper could introduce me to everyone I needed to speak to. However, as a result of my placement and my attendance at numerous events and meetings and my positive relationships with individuals across the organisation I believe I was able to combine my own observations and understanding of the organisation with the insight of key individuals within relevant areas to identify the most appropriate participants for my study. The BME Community Development Officer and the Corporate Equalities Officer were two individuals who invested significant time and energy into supporting my research and made countless introductions and recommendations of individuals it would be worthwhile me speaking to. I witnessed a willingness to support the research among Council employees generally, a large

number of whom offered to provide advice or assistance where necessary and recommend further individuals worth speaking to and I will expand on the significance of this spirit of cooperation further in Section 4.4.

Regularly attending – and also presenting interim findings of my research at – the Council’s Equalities consultative group (a network of employees interested in and or working in areas relating to equalities) offered networking opportunities and highlighted other individuals willing to participate in the research and share their experiences. It also offered further insight into the way that the Council acknowledges and approaches issues relating to equality and diversity.

When seeking to identify participants from outside of the Council, I again experienced an initial benefit from the partnership as many individuals or organisations outside of the Council worked closely with them and so staff from within the Council were often able to signpost me to these key individuals within, for example, relevant local community organisations, schools and voluntary sector bodies.

## **Voluntary sector**

It was clear from the early stages that it would be important for the research to speak to as many key individuals and organisations involved in the process of making and implementing policy and interventions relating to multicultural and community within Milton Keynes as possible. Outside of Milton Keynes Council two of the most well-known organisations locally in terms of their involvement and commentary on these issues were the Milton Keynes Council for Voluntary Organisations (recently

changed to Community Action: MK) and the Milton Keynes Equality Council (formerly the Milton Keynes Racial Equality Council). The Chair of the Equality Council is a well-known public figure locally and is often asked to comment on current issues by the local press and so I approached her via email and she agreed to be interviewed on two occasions at her offices. I was also approached at one of my internal research dissemination events in the Council offices by a 'Community Mobiliser' from MKCVO who expressed an interest in the research and later agreed to be interviewed, therefore providing the research with a more rounded impression of local community policy-making than just the views of Milton Keynes Council staff. It was equally important to speak to members of the communities themselves and the ways in which I approached this task are discussed next.

### **Migrant groups, organisations and (religious) leaders**

The project aimed to combine a concern for the ways in which public policy might develop in response to the experiences of particular minority ethnic communities with a focus on the processes by which they are included in local governance processes. Research participants within the Ghanaian and Somali communities were identified by making contact with specific migrant group organisations and associations, either as a result of existing knowledge of the communities, or via signposting from Milton Keynes Council employees who had worked with them in the past. In most cases once contact was successfully made with the head of the organisation or association permission was also given for an interview to be conducted with the same individual. It was vital that I identified and spoke to their respective heads in order to secure access to the group and an understanding of how



they were organised and led, however it was also important that I cast my net more widely to include the members of these social organisations via internal snowball sampling. When I approached members of the social organisations I was aware that gatekeepers may play a significant role in the participation of other members and so efforts were made to approach these individuals in advance and offer clear explanations of the research goals and focus. I was aware that it was necessary to exercise caution around the involvement of these gatekeepers in my research and to seek to achieve a balance between the input and access they offered. It was also understood that not all members of the migrant groups would be members of the social organisations and that some division might exist between those that are and are not members. Therefore I did not rely solely upon social organisations for research participants but also utilised other means of contact such as personal contacts, religious organisations and other social activities to operate a wider snowball sample of other Ghanaian and Somali residents within the city. Where the project seeks to speak to groups of young people consent was sought from the parents as well as the school, religious or social organisation from which the sample was taken, prior to any research being conducted.

Identifying and recruiting participants from the Ghanaian community of Milton Keynes was aided by the fact that I had some existing contacts from within this community prior to commencing this research and so entered into the project with a degree of background knowledge, insight and access to the community. I was aware that there was a community association named AGMK (Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes) responsible for organising regular social gatherings and

providing pastoral care and support for members of the community, so this was one of my first points of call in accessing the community. I attended one of the meetings of the association and an existing contact introduced me to the Chairperson with whom I discussed some of my own background as someone who was raised in Milton Keynes with previous experience researching migrant communities in the UK, as well as offering a brief summary of my research aims and areas of interest. I arranged an interview with the Chairperson of the association at the end of this meeting and he expressed great enthusiasm for the research and a willingness to support and participate wherever possible. I was able to conduct an extended interview with the Chairperson who went into great detail about the experiences of Ghanaians within Milton Keynes and the role played by the association within the community through the years since he had arrived. He also aided me in identifying Ghanaian young people to participate in a focus group based upon membership of the association.

I was aware, as a result of data from the Milton Keynes Schools Census (as well as via conversations with other Ghanaians), that the Ghanaian community (as with any other) was multifaceted, particularly in terms of factors such as economic position, languages spoken, nationality, migration pattern, age and time spent within the city. It was therefore clear that it would not be sufficient just to speak to members of AGMK and expect them to represent the views and experiences of all Ghanaians in Milton Keynes. Early indications from the field suggested that churches were a key access point to the Ghanaian community and so I engaged two local Ghanaian pastors. The first had participated in previous research on Ghanaian migrant populations in both London and Milton Keynes, worked at the Open

University and led a very mixed congregation, which, while mainly 'Ghanaian', contained those who had moved to Milton Keynes from places including Germany, the Netherlands, Ghana and London. The other pastor was introduced to me by a Ghanaian member of staff at the Council who ran a youth group at her church and had responded to my notice in the Milton Keynes Council 'Tuesday Bulletin' and while his church did contain some of this diversity too its congregation was mainly Ghanaians who had moved to Milton Keynes from London some time ago. Both pastors were very willing to be interviewed (as were most of the community association leaders and representatives I spoke to) and were also very willing to be consulted on, and help to negotiate access to, their communities. They also later assisted me in establishing two further focus groups with Ghanaian young people, drawing the participants from their church congregation.

Accessing the Somali community in Milton Keynes was more complicated as I did not have the same background knowledge and existing relationships to provide a convenient starting point. I began, as I had with the Ghanaian community, by looking into the existence of community associations and organisations. I identified two, the Horn of Africa Welfare Association and the Somali Community Association. I approached the leaders of each of the two main groups to introduce myself and my research and request interviews. Both of these individuals were extremely helpful and supportive, however I was less successful in speaking to other members of the community outside of these two organisations. This was partly as a result of the more noticeable division and antagonism which existed within the Somali community (along clan lines and also within Milton Keynes on more personal levels

caused in part, in one respondents' opinion, by funding criteria which had led to the proliferation of Somali community groups bidding for public funding against each other). I did also manage to get a great deal of support and assistance from an Ethnic Minority Support Assistant of Somali origin in one of the participating Secondary schools. This participant was able to give me some background into the history of the Somali community in Milton Keynes, having lived in Milton Keynes for many years and after having had extensive involvement with the various community associations in their formative years. This was valuable as, while it was only one persons' account, once it was combined with the accounts of others working with and for the Somali community and its associations I gained a better picture of the divisions and tensions (as well as positive opportunities) which existed for and between Somalis in general, as well as in the Milton Keynes area specifically.

I established focus groups with Somali young people using samples from both respective community associations as well as the secondary school in which the Somali Ethnic Minority Support Assistant was based. Due to unavoidable personal circumstances the leader of the Somali Community Association had to return to Somalia temporarily, and on short notice, causing the cancellation of the focus group which had been planned to take place with a sample of young people from his organisation. Fortunately the other two focus groups took place and were reasonably successful. One challenge which was encountered when conducting focus groups with Somali young people (in contrast to those conducted with Ghanaian young people) was the difficulty in getting parents to sign the consent forms necessary to participate. It proved to be much more difficult to communicate (either

directly or via community leaders and gatekeepers) the importance of getting these forms signed prior to conducting the focus groups, leading to several young people being unable to participate.

Identifying further Somali or other Muslim religious figures within the city also proved challenging. My research highlighted that the nature of religious practice among the Somali community was relatively informal and therefore difficult for a researcher to access. I was aware that various Somali religious services were taking place, meeting weekly for Friday prayers, for example. However, in contrast to Ghanaians and even wider Muslim religious organisations such as the Milton Keynes Muslim Association (MKMA) who promoted their religious activities through minibuses, community activities, fundraising campaigns, websites and other promotional activities, these services took place in a variety of rented community centres across the city in areas like Netherfield and Conniburrow with large Somali populations. The informal nature of these groups made it difficult to establish firm contact with someone in a position of authority who I could interview. I pursued several individuals from the MKMA as this organisation was highlighted to me as being quite diverse and containing Somali members. However, after numerous emails and telephone calls I was unable to get a response. Ultimately, two focus groups were conducted with Somali young people, one of the Somali sample groups was drawn from a school based in one of the central-city areas which has the highest proportion of Somali pupils in the city, while the other was drawn from members of a Somali youth club.

Speaking to Ghanaian and Somali community leaders offered the project an understanding of community construction within the area. Semi-structured interviews revealed the 'representative' or 'spokesperson' role played by the leaders of these bodies (as well as the organisations themselves) among the migrant populations themselves and as gatekeepers between the communities and the local authority. By gaining insight into the background and make-up of the two migrant communities within Milton Keynes (how they were formed and how they operate (or not) as members of migrant and religious community groups) it was possible to address Research Question Two, in understanding how social capital and formal and informal capacity within the two communities was mobilised.

The project was able to conduct two separate focus groups with Somali young people successfully generating a wealth of useful data. The number of participants in each focus group ranged from three to seven participants and so inevitably this impacted upon the dynamics of the interview and the way in which responses were gathered. The interview with only three participants, while smaller than expected (two dropped out at the last minute) was one of the most fruitful in terms of responses received as it was possible to really take the time to discuss responses within the group and get really detailed insight into the feelings and experiences of the participants without the challenge within a larger group of needing to ensure that all participants' views were heard. In contrast, during the focus groups with six and seven participants it was common to find some young people less inclined to participate as others who had more to say would tend to dominate discussion. While prompting and probing did elicit responses from quieter

participants it was still obvious that seven participants was too many and provided little added value compared to those containing six, which were themselves challenging, but not unmanageable.

The age of participants had a noticeable impact on participants' experiences of the interview process. In the few cases where participants were younger (14 or 15 years old) they understandably struggled to engage with the subject matter to the same degree as the majority of other participants who were older, typically between the ages of 16-20. Recognising this I made a point of taking extra measures to bring these younger respondents into the discussion and draw out their views and experiences on the issues being discussed. It was also necessary on some occasions to rephrase or reword questions for this slightly younger audience. In groups containing a wider age range the younger participants were often deferential to older ones in the way they contributed. In others it appeared that they were either less confident in discussing their views or possibly did not always relate to the subjects being discussed. The target age of participants for the focus groups was sixteen to twenty-five, however when a couple of participants were suggested by group facilitators who were younger than this age bracket the decision was taken to include them since the majority of participants were of the age targeted. Also there was the potential for yet greater insight into how experiences may have changed over the years. In most cases each group contained quite a good mix of ages and this offered a more varied array of perspectives within each focus group. The physical and demographic changes that had taken place within Milton Keynes became evident from the way in which older respondents noted how their experiences when

they first arrived and were growing up in the city often differed from the general consensus within the group.

Two of the focus groups with Ghanaian young people took place on church premises (one during service and one immediately after), one of these was within a private building which the church in question was leasing on an industrial estate in the south of the city while the other was in a primary school building that the church rented weekly to hold services. The third focus group with Ghanaian young people was held in the home of the Chair of the Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes. The focus groups with Somali young people were held in a classroom within a secondary school with a high proportion of Somali students and in a youth club which takes place in the centre of the city in a converted space for youth activities owned and run by Milton Keynes Council above a cinema. The sites in which the focus groups took place are also significant. They were chosen as they were familiar to the participants and believed to put them most at ease and willing to participate fully in the research. For example, participants drawn from a church congregation participated in a focus group in a separate room within the building which they were familiar with, as did those drawn from the school and youth club samples, while the AGMK sample held their focus group in the home of the Chair whose son participated and who was friends with the other participants and therefore comfortable in these surroundings.

Also, in the interests of making the participants comfortable, building a more 'at ease' research environment and encouraging participation, I provided refreshments in the form of pizzas and drinks at the beginning of the focus group and



also provided all participants with complementary vouchers to the cinema or a music store at the end of the focus group in order to both incentivise and reward young people participating in the research. The pizza prior to the start of the focus group seemed to serve as an effective ice-breaker and got people talking and relaxed. While the vouchers distributed at the end were also well received and appeared to cement the perception among the participants that the focus group had been an enjoyable experience.

I managed the process of asking questions within the context of the focus group by preparing an interview guide (see Appendix C) specifically for the focus groups containing five core questions covering the themes of multicultural, communities, identities, new cities, each with between two and three follow-up questions prepared in advance. Inevitably, with the nature of focus groups, responses are unpredictable and so while the questions contained within this guide were used as an outline for discussion and were asked of every group, it was also important to respond to and pursue matters of interest arising from responses received during each focus group. These varied significantly between groups and provided a wealth of insight which would not have been possible without using this method of research. There was a good mix in the style of questions asked. Some were 'openly' worded and phrased in order to 'break the ice' and to tease-out early responses. Some were worded in the form of statements for discussion to encourage debate and discussion within the group. Others were more targeted and focused on individual opinions and experiences. The balance of all of these different approaches in the interview guide questions and follow-ups, in addition to the flexibility

exercised in exploring emerging areas as and when they arose, served to create an appealing and enjoyable focus group for young people to participate in which yielded a wealth of interesting responses.

Managing the dynamics of a focus group with young people was challenging and it was important to be aware of my position as the researcher and refrain as much as possible from exerting any of my own preconceptions or assumptions upon those participating in the focus groups. My ability as the researcher to mediate and control the discussion in order to ensure that all participants were able to be involved in the discussion (and that it was not monopolised by a select few) was vital to the success of focus groups interviews. Morgan (1988, p. 21) notes that the difficulty in controlling focus groups and the volume and variety of data which they generate is one of their biggest weaknesses, in contrast to one-on-one interviews. Of equal importance to controlling the discussion is ensuring that detailed and accurate notes are taken to record participants responses as well as the general atmosphere of the day (something that is particularly challenging in the focus group scenario). Morgan (1988, p. 16) raises concerns about the role of the researcher in the focus group. Focus group discussion is, to some degree, controlled by the researcher. Therefore, while there is more opportunity for free-flowing discussion between researcher and participant and among participants themselves than in a one-on-one semi-structured interview scenario, the extent to which these interactions can be considered 'natural' is questionable. It is for this reason that this research also undertook various forms of participant observation in order to unearth the most objective perspectives on this research possible.

## **Educationalists**

In selecting the schools I wished to speak to I took into consideration a variety of factors, such as; ethnic composition (whether or not the school had a sizable number of Ghanaian or Somali pupils), school size/type (a balance of primary and secondary schools was sought), location (some from newer 'growth' areas of the city and some from older more 'established' areas). I did so in order to try to ensure that the sample was as representative as possible and that it was possible to draw comparisons between different areas within Milton Keynes to avoid looking at diversity only in the (micro) context of decline.

It was anticipated that something potentially different and worth investigating about Milton Keynes was the way that some minority ethnic groups tended to be quite evenly spread across the various grid-square estates which make up the city, while some were concentrated within certain older areas (for example the Bangladeshis in Duncombe Street, Bletchley and the Pakistanis in Wolverton) in ways that could be described as following a similar pattern to more established urban areas across the rest of UK such as Birmingham or London. It was also noted from data gathered from the MKi Observatory ([www.mkiobservatory.org.uk](http://www.mkiobservatory.org.uk)) that many grid-square estates within the city contained a very balanced mix of ethnic groups and did not follow the pattern of some larger urban areas of high rates of minority ethnic group concentration in one or two areas.

I identified six schools on the basis of several factors, primarily; their location (either a new or well-established grid-square estate); type (primary or secondary); ethos (mainstream or religious); size and populations of my case study groups

(Ghanaians and Somalis). I targeted three primary schools, three secondary schools and one further education college. I wrote to the Head Teachers of all seven describing my research and requesting their participation either personally or through a relevant colleague (most often the Head of Ethnic Minority Achievement Support or English as a Second Language within each school). I received no written replies and so followed these up with emails and phone calls. I confirmed participation with one state primary school based in one of the oldest central-city estates of the city where there were twenty-five different languages spoken by its students and a rapid turnover of students leaving and arriving into the country. The other primary school which agreed to speak to me was a Catholic primary school based right on the edge of the city in an area with very few of either of my target groups. However, the data suggested (and the staff confirmed) that they had a significant Ghanaian population as a result of the high proportion of Ghanaians who were either Christian or preferred to send their children to a school with a religious ethos. I also spoke to staff working in Ethnic Minority Support capacities in two secondary schools based in long established grid-square estates, both of which were identified in EMASS statistics as containing high proportions of my case study groups (Ghanaians and Somalis). The secondary school containing the highest proportion of Ghanaian students was a Catholic secondary school but unfortunately I was unable to gain access or make contact successfully with anyone from that school after numerous attempts. I was equally unsuccessful in gaining access to the further education college based nearby, which may have provided an alternative take on the multicultural nature of the city, since its pupils are drawn from all over Milton Keynes and not, as they are in secondary schools, based on catchment areas (potentially

bringing different groups of people together where they would not otherwise have been mixing). Nevertheless, the four schools (two primary and two secondary) that did participate contributed a wealth of rich and varied data to the findings of this research project.

Educationalists spoke in particular to Research Question Three on the role played by particular loci in creating 'community-ness'. They offered a school-based perspective on issues of integration, cohesion and multiculturalism as they affect young people of school age within the city since they are witnessing the coming-together of young people from different backgrounds everyday within the classrooms of Milton Keynes.

During every interview I followed a short guide (see Appendix D) containing core questions around the four themes of multiculturalism, communities, new cities and cohesion, each with several suggestions for follow-up questions as well as notes of the issues of interest which the core questions addressed. In addition to this interview guide in most cases I prepared a short list of specific questions or areas of interest relating to each particular interviewee and their field of expertise. As is the nature of semi-structured interviews, I was prepared to pursue matters of interest arising from my participants and obviously as these varied dramatically between individuals it was important to follow up these areas where possible to enhance the data generated. Every interview was recorded using a digital voice recorder and later transcribed, analysed and coded, however notes were also taken during the interviews where necessary. In addition, a research diary was kept to detail my

reflections on the on-going research process which could be referred back to at a later stage.

Selecting the focus group samples using gatekeepers from these organisations and institutions offered a formal approach to accessing young people from the desired case study groups. It also clearly provided a degree of comfort for the participants involved in each as they were from the same church, school, youth club or migrant association and seemed comfortable interacting and discussing the issues raised with each other, where arguably a group of strangers may not. Drawing sample groups from these different bodies also offered the research a glimpse of the diversity which exists within each respective 'community'.

## **Ethical considerations**

Informed consent operated as an on-going process throughout the project. This started with the consent of the organisations themselves. By virtue of becoming a CASE partner for the project Milton Keynes Council as an organisation has given their consent for the project to take place. Other organisations from which consent was sought included Milton Keynes Equality Council, Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes, Milton Keynes Somali Community Association, the Horn of Africa Welfare Association as well as the various schools and religious centres which participated. Consent was also sought from the individual participants themselves. In accordance with standard UK practice detailed information on the research activities proposed (see Appendix E) were also sent out to all participants including; full disclosure of the research aims, the types of data to be collected, the method of data collection, a statement of confidentiality and data protection, the required time commitment, the

right to withdraw, the right to have data destroyed, information concerning possible risks and the contact details of both the researcher and supervisors to be used along with a consent form for signature (see Appendix F). Since many of the participants were young people and therefore considered vulnerable, obtaining parental consent was crucial to gaining informed consent. Also, given the fact that many of my participants were refugees and asylum seekers it was important to be aware of the potential vulnerability that accompanied this experience, as it was also equally important to be considerate and protective of the policy-makers and practitioners who participated with my research who were working in often sensitive areas of local policy. Feedback was given to research participants at appropriate times following field research and in the concluding months of thesis preparation to ensure that participants remained informed of research findings and that accuracy of research data was maintained throughout the research process.

The registration of the project complied with Open University requirements. The protection of data was recognised as crucial to maintaining the trust and confidence of my participants and as such all information recorded was coded to protect the identity of the research participants. These codes contained the minimum amount of information necessary to validate the research and served as an aid to memory for the researcher. This was restricted to name, age, gender and ethnic group. Only I had access to this information which was stored on a secure database that was password protected. Any data collected and held was stored on this secure database. When writing up the findings of the project the identities of participants were protected as much as possible using pseudonyms, however it was

noted (and participants were made aware) that in some cases the nature of a participants position may make complete anonymity difficult. Given the focus of the project on schools and the provision for young people many of the participants were children and young people and so their vulnerability necessitated a full CRB check which I hold as a result of being a qualified Child Protection Officer through an extra-curricular interest in coaching basketball to young people.

Due to the multi-disciplinary nature of the project its dissemination was to take a number of forms. At the end of the first year an interim report was produced for Milton Keynes Council on the findings of the review of literature on community and cohesion policy (see Appendix G). In the second year I presented the basics of my research project along with some preliminary findings to the Equalities Consultative Group internally within the Council which was made up of Council staff either working on or interested in equality and diversity issues where it was well received and further supported as a result via networking and later interview with those in attendance. Towards the middle of the third year a more detailed presentation event was held on interim research findings to the Open University; key figures at Milton Keynes Council as well as various research participants (see Appendix H). The event consisted of presentations from me and members of the research team as well as the Milton Keynes Council Cohesion team. Members of the audience were given the opportunity to discuss the findings in a question and answer session and feedback forms were also distributed and returned electronically (see Appendix I).



All of the research methods involved working directly with people, which meant that it was important for me to be as transparent and open with them as possible. I prepared a successful proposal for the Open University's Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee (see Appendix J). In order to ensure my project was in-line with ethical standards I ensured that all of my participants undertook a process of informed consent whereby they were aware of how the data was to be used and were offered anonymity wherever possible. However, it was made explicit that there could be instances where complete anonymity would not be possible due to the profile of roles in certain organisations.

### **Analysing the results**

All of the semi-structured and focus groups were recorded using a digital voice recorder after gaining the appropriate consent from participants. From here all of these recordings were transcribed verbatim and from analysing these transcripts the key points were marked with a series of codes extracted from the text. From these codes themes and concepts began to develop. These themes and concepts emerged gradually as each interview transcript was analysed. By identifying these from one interview it was then possible to compare and contrast these with those found in others in order to begin to develop an accurate sense of key narratives emerging. Fielding and Thomas (2001, in Gilbert 2001, p. 137) note the significance of the analytical challenge of identifying thematically similar segments of text, both within and between interviews. Once identified these common themes were organised systematically into codes so that they could be retrieved and used later to aid reflections on research findings. Coding was performed both manually and using

Nvivo 8 computer software which enabled excerpts to be categorised on the basis of various different criteria simultaneously and retrieved accordingly.

Throughout the course of my fieldwork I maintained regular notes as well as a research diary to record my activities and key observations. I was able to combine these two methods of recording 'softer' data such as my experiences, encounters and reflections whilst 'in the field' with the word-for-word detail gained from the transcriptions of my semi-structured and focus groups to offer my research a well-rounded account of local policy-making in Chapter Five and community and migrant settlement in Chapter Six. As noted in Section 4.2 justifying the multi-method approach adopted, recording my data in all of these ways enabled the research the opportunity to test evidence gathered and theories developing by comparing and contrasting the results gained from the various means via a process of triangulation. Also, as mentioned in Section 4.2, the use of different methods 'provide[d] complementary information' (Hammersley 2008, p. 31).

## **4.4 Research reflections and key insights**

### **Between two worlds: Being a CASE Student**

In the early stages of the research I was based at the Milton Keynes Council offices in the Community Development Team, within the Children and Young People's Department. Here I met and made contacts with individuals working in areas such as Community Development, BME Community Development and youth services. As these contacts grew I was able to develop a small network of colleagues supportive of my research and who acted as both 'guides' and 'gatekeepers' during the early

stages through the processes and mechanisms which existed within the organisation, affording me a degree of 'insider status'. This status made the process of reaching key individuals within the organisation or its external strategic partners far easier than it would otherwise have been. During this placement I was embedded within a team that was primarily focused on policy-delivery and I saw first-hand how issues such as BME Community Development were being resourced, supported and approached on a micro-level.

One difficulty was identified in anonymising participants from within Milton Keynes Council as they all seemed to know that each other had spoken to me and wanted to discuss what each other had said. Although growing rapidly the size of Milton Keynes and more specifically the size of the 'equality/diversity/cohesion' policy field meant that most key figures knew each other. For example, several different council respondents mentioned the same Somali community leader as 'the person to speak to' when it came to the Somali community. It was apparent that, in this 'field' at least, all of the key figures knew each other. What became clearer as the project progressed was that actually the individuals whom policy-makers and practitioners seemed to disproportionately consult did not always represent the interests of, for example the 'Somali community' to the extent they claimed but rather the members of the Somali organisation of which they led. It emerged through the course of the research that in fact new community groups were being established all the time within these identities of Somali and Ghanaian, undermining the approach of speaking to community leaders, or at least the approach of always

consulting with the same small sample. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

This placement was often challenging as the majority of the individuals within the area I was based were not working in areas directly relating to my research. My external supervisor during this period was split between bases on a different level of the same building I was based in and in another building several miles away and was a specialist in the education field, which made up just one aspect of my research project. At times it was difficult to maintain a strong connection between my research and wider Council activities and priorities. It was clear that staff members working in areas of interest to the research (such as the BME Community Development Officer and other members of the Community Development team) were receiving limited resources and support as a result of shifting strategic priorities and they felt their impact was often limited as a result (as evidenced by Aisha in Chapter Six). This was an important finding in itself as it indicated the difficulty experienced by the local authority in working across departments with shared agendas such as community cohesion. This was especially true of members of staff working in community development (particularly the solitary BME Community Development Officer) who, as a result of staffing changes, were left with relatively little managerial support. It became clear throughout the fieldwork that staffing changes and regular shifts in strategic priorities were extremely common and seemed to be both a cause and effect of the disjuncture of local policy-making, in this case in approaches to community development and community cohesion.

Later I was based in the Strategy and Regeneration Department alongside those working on strategic approaches to issues of equality and community cohesion. During this part of the placement I was exposed more directly to the development of local policy and again made contacts with members of this team and others based nearby as a result of introductions and networking opportunities. A good example of how the collaboration and placement within Milton Keynes Council aided my research can be found with my relationship with one of my external supervisors within the Council, the Corporate Equalities Officer (later the Equality and Cohesion Manager), who introduced me to the Cohesion Officer, the Community Safety Manager, the MKi Observatory (who are the primary source of demographic data within the city), as well as numerous community and religious leaders via the Milton Keynes Council of Faiths network. Moreover, the benefit of being based within Milton Keynes Council one day per week was evident both in terms of understanding working processes within the organisation itself and making contact with staff whose work was relevant to my research. It was also helpful when attempting to identify community groups which had registered with the Council and then to follow up, establish contact with and later approach them for an interview.

Whilst based in Milton Keynes Council I attended various meetings where I was able to witness the local multicultural policy-making process in action, for example in Community Cohesion Action Groups and within the Community Belonging Thematic Partnership meetings. Of interest for this research was the fact that my time based in the Strategy and Regeneration Department coincided with the development of the very first *Community Cohesion Strategy* (and subsequently

Cohesion Plan) for Milton Keynes. This strategy was a direct result of central government requirements and the first of its kind within Milton Keynes. It became apparent early on that pre-existing work in this field in Milton Keynes was relatively sparse and that, even for those tasked with its implementation, the introduction of these new strategies would involve a learning curve and a degree of adjustment in modes of thinking.

I found there to be very little linkage between seemingly related departments within Milton Keynes Council such as the Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Service, BME community development, and community cohesion. In fact, it was actually commonplace for me to be asked to introduce Council colleagues or keep individuals informed of what fellow colleagues were working on that might relate to the work they were doing. I was complimented on several occasions whilst conducting interviews for the way in which I was drawing various strands of work being done within the Council together in the questions I was asking where no linkages had previously existed, something that was only possible as a result of my position as a CASE student.

Another challenge I faced relating to the collaboration with Milton Keynes Council was knowing where to draw the line between when I was expected to participate as a member of the Council team I was in and when I believed it would be either more appropriate ethically, or more beneficial from a research standpoint, to be a non-participant observer. Often I appeared to be seen (by my external supervisor and other members of the team) as 'just another member of staff'. In terms of being able to conduct participant observation this was obviously of benefit

as it meant that I had 'blended in' to a certain degree with those around me. However, whilst I was aware that in some contexts being asked to help with a small task here or there on behalf of the department in which I was based was part of the 'give and take' of negotiating insider status, there were times when it was either inappropriate or simply unnecessary for me to perform the tasks being asked of me and would have detracted from the time spent on my research. At times it was clear that there was confusion among members of the department over my placement as a research student as opposed to a staff member.

Conducting participant observation whilst based in Milton Keynes Council was challenging at times. Due to the nature of my status as a CASE student I was often viewed as a resource due to the knowledge I possessed on issues such as community and multicultural. This meant that Council staff, particularly my external supervisor, would often seek my involvement or participation to the point that I was, on occasions stretched outside of the remit of my role, necessitating a degree of balance between being a participant and being an observer. While I was more than willing to be involved and offer support as part of the collaborative nature of the CASE partnership, at times I was conscious of the effect that my involvement would have on the policy process I was observing. For example, when attending the first meeting of the 'Community Belonging Thematic Partnership' I was asked to help by facilitating small group discussions between those sitting at my table during the 'break-out' sessions of the meeting. However I was also expected to contribute a lot to the event more widely as a result of my knowledge of the subject matter, where I preferred to take a less active role in order to observe the way that the partnership

operated. This was particularly problematic in terms of being a relatively 'overt' participant observer within meetings such as this one within the field of local public policy, where my input could alter or shape the outcome of the policy-process. It was my intention to observe and subsequently evaluate and understand this process in action. It was apparent that offering too much of my own personal views at this stage could potentially shape the processes I was attempting to observe and understand. However, I was aware that there is always a trade-off when conducting participant observation (especially as it relates to the expectations of gatekeepers) between the times spent being a 'participant' and those spent focusing on being able to conduct 'observation'. My approach was to oblige with some smaller tasks to 'pitch in' where I was confident that there would be no significant impact upon the outcomes I was observing. The event itself was being held to gather views and develop action points on the basis of consultation with key stakeholders and so to not have involved myself at all in this process would have presented a barrier to successful participant observation.

Also related to the experience of being a CASE student and managing a collaborative research project was a concern over the way in which I would be received by the communities. I found that (in some cases as a result of the partnership with Milton Keynes Council and in some cases simply because I was a researcher from the Open University) there was a view that there was a sense of a transference of legitimacy from myself as a researcher to the respective community leader as a bona fide community representative, that by speaking to me and participating with the research they were able to demonstrate this status. The Chair



of the Association of Ghanaian in Milton Keynes introduced me to members of his organisation at a meeting and explained what I was doing in this same vein.

I was, however, also aware that relations between Milton Keynes Council and community groups, the third sector and other external stakeholders were not always entirely positive. For example, several participants from local schools, voluntary sector organisations and community groups expressed significant displeasure with some of the policy approaches of Milton Keynes Council. Therefore I was conscious of the potential for there to be a negative perception of my research among the communities and other external stakeholders if my research was seen to be aligned too closely Milton Keynes Council and the potentially unpopular policies and approaches on related areas such as the provision of support for students from ethnic minority backgrounds, community cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) as a result of its CASE partnership status. As such, I always made a point of explaining my status as a research student – and not an employee of Milton Keynes Council – and also the nature of the project as a collaboration between the Open University and Milton Keynes Council. I emphasised the fact that both partners were interested in sharing and learning from the results.

Another challenge which arose on a few occasions was when the areas of interest for the project and those of the department of the Council in which I was based (Strategy and Regeneration) were at odds with one another. For example, when deciding where geographically to conduct some of my fieldwork my external supervisor was keen for the research to focus on the areas of Bletchley or Wolverton as these were the areas with the most well-publicised problems in areas like

community cohesion and also the areas in which the Council had spent the most time attempting to tackle these problems. My case study groups were Ghanaian and Somali migrants and demographic data had demonstrated that neither of my two case study groups lived in these two areas in any sizable numbers. While it was important for the research to investigate some of the initiatives in existence within these areas as a way of understanding the approaches taken by the Council so far, ultimately, in the absence of significant Somali or Ghanaian populations, it would not have been an appropriate site to conduct fieldwork.

There were also difficulties in the experience of high staff turnover within the Council and its effect on those appointed to be my external supervisor. During the course of my study I was assigned a variety of different external supervisors by Milton Keynes Council, some of whose work was only very loosely relevant to my research and so with the best of intentions found it difficult to be actively involved in the research. Due to the high rate of staff turnover within the organisation these supervisors left the organisation fairly regularly (ultimately all of them left prior to my completion), which had the unfortunate result of limiting the input of the CASE partner in the research and also the positive impact of my 'insider status'.

Having noted these considerations it is also important to note that despite the challenges encountered there was a generally positive reception to my research by all of those whom I approached, both within the Council and the communities. It is worth pointing out that by being willing to contribute to the funding of the project the Council were expressing an interest and willingness to be involved and support the principle of social research in this area. I have noted the difficulties I faced in

making contact and securing participation from those within educational settings. Yet generally the response was positive and supportive with most of my interview participants recommending other individuals it might be useful for me to speak to and a large number attending my final research presentation event held at the Milton Keynes Council main chamber and offering positive feedback and messages of support for the work I was doing. This suggested that, particularly in the case of Council officers, while they may not always have known how to engage with my work or me as a researcher, they had enjoyed the experience of contributing to the research and had seen some wider benefit after attending the presentation event.

### **Researching multicultural in new city spaces**

The experience of researching issues of multicultural, community and social inclusion in Milton Keynes was challenging for a variety of reasons. While the previous section has noted the willingness of participants to support the research and signpost me towards other relevant individuals (particularly among a few key staff within the local authority such as the BME Community Development Officer, the Corporate Equalities Officer and the Community Safety Manager), the experience of the research generally was that of a sensitive policy area where Council staff often found it difficult to adjust and cope with the new and constantly changing nature of diversity Milton Keynes was experiencing (this will be expanded upon more within Chapter Five). There was also a lack of clarity over the concepts being used in policy among policy-makers as David, the Community Safety Manager for the local authority highlights:

... I mean the community safety and community cohesion agendas cross. I'm never quite sure what community cohesion means, um is it about a community being able to relate to one another, you know various elements in the community while retaining a separate identity or is it about identities merging, you know it's like the use of that word integration, what does integration actually mean? And um, if people preserve separate identities as part of the cohesion agenda there is always room for clash, for, um, for difference of opinion. In a way a healthy community is one where those differences of opinion can exist but they can be resolved by peaceful means.

This comment from David, a very helpful, knowledgeable and senior member of staff at Milton Keynes Council highlights the ambiguity and sense of confusion he felt working with policies such as community cohesion in Milton Keynes, possibly as a result of the relatively new nature of the agenda in the area, as well as the constantly changing nature of both the dynamics of the city's population as well as of the policy itself (as evidenced in Chapter Three), making accessing communities in Milton Keynes more challenging. It has already been noted earlier in this chapter that the very first cohesion strategy was in the process of being developed during my placement and that the Preventing Violent Extremism strategy was also launched towards the end of my time at the Council. Prior to my placement at the Council there were relatively few pre-existing localised policies relating to race and multiculturalism, yet there were a significant number generated during the course of my placement. Those documents that did exist were relatively easy to get hold of as a result of the level of access to the Council intranet system afforded me by the CASE

partnership. The relatively new nature of multicultural policy making to Milton Keynes was evident at various stages of the research, particularly during community engagement practices which are discussed in greater detail next in Chapter Five.

Having considered the experience of conducting research with policy-makers and practitioners it is also necessary to reflect on the experience of working with Somali and Ghanaian communities. Given the context of this research into the Black African Ghanaian and Somali communities of Milton Keynes it is important to note consideration of the effects of my position as a white researcher, popularised by the concept of 'race-of-interviewer-effects' (RIE) developed in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. Troyna (1998 in Connolly and Troyna 1998, p. 97-98) notes that in these studies symmetry between the ethnicity of the interviewer and respondent was believed to elicit more 'genuine' and 'accurate' accounts as otherwise the data generated from black respondents is 'likely to be inhibited, distorted and inferior unless 'racial matching' is achieved, precisely because of the unequal power relationship between interviewer and respondent and/or by radical differences in their life experiences and cultural frames of reference'. Gunaratnam (2003, p. 54) also notes that, particularly with regard to 'racial topics', 'an underlying assertion in the survey literature on interracial interviewing is that racialized difference between the research participant and interviewer can affect the 'genuineness' and 'accuracy' of what research participants say'. However, she believes it is important to question the 'evidence' of the difficulties and barriers to interracial communication between interviewer and interviewee which she sees as 'based upon particular ideas about racialized subjectivity and ideas about a single truth' (Gunaratnam 2003, p. 56). That

it is necessary to move beyond ideas of race and/or ethnicity as fixed qualities with stable meanings held within groups and assumptions of research subjects as holding a 'racialized un/consciousness' and 'deeply threatened by racialized difference' (Gunaratnam 2003, p. 56). In addition, Troyna (1998 in Connolly and Troyna 1998, p.101) points to the reality that the 'multiple identities of the interviewer intrude on the research process so that outsider/insider status is confirmed and achieved in a variety of ways'. So, as well as an appreciation of the fact that racial and/or ethnic identities are held in various ways and to different degrees by research subjects, the impact of the multiple identities held by both the researcher and the research subject must also be acknowledged. In the case of this research (and this researcher), these could take the form of 'white researcher' and 'black research subject' but could also be impacted by the researchers position as a young male with a significant connection to, and understanding of the same city as my participants, as well as the multiple identities and experiences of each of the research participants, discussed in the rest of this section and the next.

In conducting this research I found accessing and engaging with the Ghanaian community to be a relatively straightforward process. The individuals I approached from community associations and religious centres were open to the prospect of being involved in the research and made themselves and their congregations accessible. As noted earlier in some cases individuals even approached me themselves to offer their support after hearing about the research and went out of their way to facilitate focus groups with young people. One participant even volunteered to drive around Milton Keynes collecting more young people for our

pre-arranged focus group after other participants dropped out at the last minute. It seemed clear that, while (as with the Somali community) many of the young people who participated in the focus groups had arrived in Milton Keynes at various points in their lives and from various different places, the more senior individuals I was engaging with from the community associations and religious centres of the Ghanaian community were relatively well established and networked within the city.

It was slightly more difficult to access the Somali community as its activities were far less formal and publicised. While the Ghanaian association AGMK had its own website, and often advertised events in the local newspapers (as did many of the Ghanaian churches) identifying Somali community activity was less straightforward. I was nevertheless able to develop strong working relationships with two Somali community leaders, Ibrahim and Hakim, and they were just as supportive and facilitative of the research and connected into local council and third sector engagement and funding processes as their Ghanaian counterparts. However identifying and accessing other Somali participants and bodies was more difficult as due to the relatively new (and constantly reshaping) nature of the community in Milton Keynes, as well as the noted divisions which exist among Somalis along ethnic – and personal – lines they operated relatively independently of the local authority, third sector organisations and the wider Somali community and so were much harder to locate and engage with.

It was recognised that issues of power relations may arise between the researcher and the researched in this study given the context of a white researcher studying Black African migrant populations (Rosaldo, 1993, in Taylor (2002, p. 3). It is

impossible to know with any degree of certainty the extent to which my position as a white researcher might have impacted upon what my Ghanaian and Somali participants may have wanted (or felt comfortable enough) to discuss. However, the honest and open responses gained during the course of the fieldwork on topics including perceptions of Milton Keynes as a multicultural city and notions of community would suggest that any such effects were minimalised. This could have been the result of a number of factors. First, the issue may have been mitigated against somewhat through the use of focus groups which lessen the significance of the researcher in the research process (the experience of which is discussed later in this chapter). Second, as indicated in Section 4.2, the ethnographic nature of the research developed a level of trust between the researcher and the researched and a series of significant relationships with individuals involved in the research which could also have contributed to lessening the negative effect of power relations and race-of-interviewer-effects upon the research. Third, my status as a 'local' researching the city which I know well and have lived in for a large part of my life may have contributed to the development of the positive 'research relationships' which I experienced during the research. These relationships may have overcome potential unease or tensions relating to perceived issues of power relations or the race-of-interviewer-effects noted earlier. This effect of researching as a 'local' is discussed in greater detail next.

### **Researching as a 'local'**

In addition to the insider status I was afforded by Milton Keynes Council employees as a result of my position as an ESRC CASE research student I was also an 'insider' in



another sense. This is because I had grown up and attended school in Milton Keynes and therefore understood a lot of the local context and shared the experience that the young people interviewed described of growing up in an area characterised by constant growth and change. As noted earlier in this chapter it was necessary for me to disclose my status as a researcher at all times but during the interviews it was clear that responses were aided by my understanding the geographies participants were describing and having shared similar experiences as them in many cases relating to Milton Keynes. Voloder (2008, p 30) comments on the process of conducting 'researching at home' and how 'in contrast to the classic model... which defines the ethnographic endeavour in terms of clear movements in and out of the field... research at home is characterised by the increased proximity and intersection between 'home', the sites of the familiar, the personal and non-research activities and 'field', the sites of the unfamiliar, the professional and research activities'. Voloder (2008, p. 30) sees the result of this being 'an increased sense of connectedness between the researcher and researched... the type and degree of this connectedness varies according to the conceptualisation and positioning of the researcher in relation to 'home''.

Neal and Walters (2006, p. 180), in reviewing the methodological approaches taken in their examination of the relationship between contemporary English rurality and notions of identity and belonging, reflect on the significance of their 'otherness' and status as 'strangers asking strange questions'. They also reflected upon the impact that their own experiences, identities and autobiographies had upon their participants' perceptions of them as 'familiar and knowledgeable strangers' as a

result of their 'whiteness and Englishness' and their individual experiences in, and attachments to, the rural (Neal and Walters 2006, p. 180). They observed that 'our seeming shared sameness with our focus group members fundamentally disrupted our strangeness' (Neal and Walters 2006, p.180). Yet a sense of strangeness did remain in other ways, for example because neither was a local resident. The researchers emphasised their rural attachments at times and at others stressing their 'urban outsidersness'. These reflections from Neal and Walters (2006) are helpful in the context of this research in considering my experience as someone from Milton Keynes researching communities within the Milton Keynes context. While for Neal and Walters (2006) it was their 'whiteness' and 'Englishness' that they shared with their focus group participants (while also drawing on their rural attachments), for my research of the Ghanaian and Somali communities it appeared that, as with my participants (albeit in a wide variety of different forms and ways), it was the fact that I was from (and lived in) Milton Keynes which constituted our 'shared experience' which could, to some extent, have played a part in creating good research relations and overcoming any potential barriers associated with our racial, ethnic or cultural differences.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has offered an understanding of the origins of the project and some of the thematic considerations which took place. It has presented a rationale for the research methods and participants selected and explained how they were identified and provided an overview of the fieldwork undertaken and the kinds of information gathered. It also discussed the approaches taken in analysing the data generated and

well as some of the key insights to come from the research. First, the challenges and opportunities associated with conducting research as an ESRC CASE student and maintaining relationships in both the policy and academic worlds. Second, conducting research on issues of multicultural and community in new city spaces as a 'local' and as a young, white, male researcher and the impact that my position as a researcher had on the research relationships formed, the quality and openness of the responses received as well as the research experience generally. Third, a justification for the continued use of case study approaches to research in these areas and how the mixed method approach to the research design offered the benefit of a diverse and multi-dimensional data set. The following two chapters present in-depth discussions of the outcomes of the project fieldwork discussed in this chapter, focusing upon local multicultural policy making in new city spaces (Chapter Five) and community and processes of migratory settlement in new city spaces (Chapter Six).

# 5. Local multicultural policy-making in new city spaces

---

## 5.1 Introduction

As argued in Chapter One, issues of multicultural policy-making are most typically researched in areas with long established BME populations. This chapter seeks to address Research Question Five by exploring how researching local multicultural policy-making within new city spaces may offer new insights into the operation of multicultural, community cohesion and social inclusion initiatives in areas with relatively short multicultural histories and in doing so identify possible ways of enhancing policy effectiveness. It also speaks to the focus of Research Question Four on establishing how local government and organisations draw on and incorporate migrant communities' social capital in policy strategies to enable their participation in the local politics of Milton Keynes. The analysis is based on findings from document analysis of several key Milton Keynes Council strategies, responses gathered from open-ended discussions and semi-structured interviews with policy-makers and practitioners and an extended period of participant observation while based in Council offices.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section reflects upon the evolution of approaches to multicultural policy-making in Milton Keynes given the rapid change to, and growth of, its population and the extensive policy architecture which has developed in response to these changes. The next section uses examples and detailed analysis of key local policy texts to highlight the shifting focus within

local multicultural policy making away from issues of race equality and multiculturalism towards ideals of prosperous and cohesive communities. The third section explains how the policy focus on community cohesion has created tensions and gaps between what is stated in policy strategies and action plans and what is actually taking place on the ground. It also examines the tensions between different agendas and perceptions within the Council, particularly between agendas such as community cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism which are formulated at the national level and implemented at the local level. The fourth section details how the tensions that are outlined have led to an approach of managing multiculturalism which relies on identifying and working through fixed and stable 'communities'. It is argued that this approach has over-simplified community engagement practices and fails to appreciate the diversity which exists within these communities as well as within the local population more broadly. Finally the chapter concludes that new city spaces present distinct challenges to multicultural policy-making and offer the opportunity to place greater emphasis on an appreciation of the diversity and fluidity that exists within communities in community engagement practices.

## **5.2 Multicultural policy making in Milton Keynes: limited history to extensive architecture**

Milton Keynes was only formally designated as a New Town on 23 January 1967. This has meant that most of its residents are migrants (or the children of those who migrated) from elsewhere, including other parts of the UK as well as abroad (MKLSP 2008, p. 12). It also has a relatively limited history of multicultural living (since the first waves of migrants were mainly white British) and an even shorter history of

multicultural policy making. Data provided in Chapter One showed that the recent, rapid and on-going changes to its collective population have resulted in Milton Keynes becoming the site of increasingly multiculturally constituted communities. Given the high proportion of school pupils from BME backgrounds and the disproportionately high number of young people living within the area this trend is likely to continue for some time (MKLSP 2008). The local authority has had to respond to these demographic changes as well as the demands placed upon it by national government, but also by local community associations and third sector organisations. In doing so an extensive architecture of posts, departments, organisations and policy documents has developed worthy of analysis and explanation. Since the General Election held of May 2010 (after the empirical research for this project was conducted), which saw a change from a Labour Government to a coalition between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, it remains unclear how much of this architecture will remain. However, despite this relative uncertainty the observations gathered during this defined period (from November 2007 until late October 2009) provide a broader understanding of the approaches to multicultural policy-making of Milton Keynes Council and the distinct challenges and opportunities associated.

As in most local authorities, multicultural policymaking was not in itself a core activity of Milton Keynes Council, which has clearly specified responsibilities relating to social services, housing, education, planning, environmental services and so on. However, there was also an increased expectation (expressed in legislation) that councils would act as some sort of 'community' government, for example, in

developing a *Sustainable Community Strategy* (MKLSP 2008). Also, the *Race Relations Amendment Act 2000* places a requirement on all public bodies to demonstrate how they respond to, and deliver on, race equality and diversity. Community policymaking in areas such as community cohesion was laid on top of an already existing set of departmental structures. As a result, the challenge of developing an effective, co-ordinated approach to tackling issues of equality, cohesion and community belonging was significant, although this was the stated ambition of the Council (and the Local Strategic Partnership). Each department had its own focus and its own priorities, even if each also accepted a responsibility for tackling those wider issues. This was reinforced by these local governments departments being linked into the different departments and agencies of national government (relating to education, young people, social services and health and so on), each of which had its own way of tackling the same issues through directives, circulars, negotiation and inspection (Rhodes 1997). The fieldwork suggested that this relationship was often complicated and challenging for policy-makers and practitioners based in different departments but seemingly working on similar issues. One participant noted her frustration at what she experienced as a side-lining of her department, despite its seemingly close connections to the community cohesion agenda:

Sometimes I don't even think half the Council know I exist... I've done various presentations, I've done one at the Equalities Consultative Group... when I first joined up we, Community Development, produced a leaflet about our team and what we did. It seems to me ever since I've been here we've been

struggling to keep a face up for Community Development because it doesn't seem to fit well on anybody's agenda, I don't know why.

Because issues of cohesion and multicultural are areas of policy that are intended to be mainstreamed across a wide range of Council departments, they are also areas over which claims are made (and responsibilities shared) – from education and the EMASS (where the focus was on educational attainment), to crime and the Community Safety Partnership (where the focus was on crime prevention), to the Chief Executive's department (which co-ordinates responses to national initiatives such as community cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism, and was the base for the Council's own equal opportunities and wider equality agenda). In this context, the local political vision was summed up (in the *Milton Keynes Community Strategy* (MKLSP 2008)) as being 'to create a city that has soul, energy and dynamism' and which 'celebrates diversity' (MKLSP 2008).

The task for me as the researcher involved following the traces of multicultural policy making through the authority. Doing so highlighted the extent to which at that time a range of initiatives existed in parallel to each other, rather than as part of an integrated strategy. It is important to stress that this does not mean that the various initiatives or approaches were necessarily inconsistent or uncomplimentary, but it does imply that guaranteeing consistency and complementarity was not a straightforward task, as the following comment from Rebecca, a policy-maker working for EMASS, demonstrates:

There's a bit of a gap between knowing it's essential and knowing how to do it, and knowing what structures to set up to ensure that that happens. I think



that what's happening is different departments, because they're so diverse and so different in their structures, they've all got different structures that go up, but structurally at the moment everybody's not clear how you bridge the gap, and how it's like a mesh isn't it? Like a multi-dimensional mesh, how do you know that somebody on this column here, how do they know who to relate to on the other column, and the other column and how they're all meeting together in different directions ... so I think at the moment until we all know what the strategic structures are it's difficult.

As noted in Chapter Four when considering the methodological approaches of this research, the policy architecture was observed emerging gradually throughout the course of the empirical research from November 2007 until late October 2009. When the participant observation began very little of what is described next had been formed which made it possible to observe how the new arrangements came to be established. A period of ambiguity was observed between policy and practice, between what was written in high-level strategy documents and what was actually taking place and being acted out by practitioners. In many cases the partnerships and strategies had yet to be (or were in the process of being) drafted and consultations and engagements with the community had yet to be conducted, leaving the approaches to these issues relatively experimental and under-developed. The emerging disparities between policy and practice will be explored in greater detail in Section 5.4 of this chapter.

Once established, the collective response to community-making was directed by the Milton Keynes Local Strategic Partnership (MKLSP) an apex body which

brought together organisations from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors within the local authority area, including Milton Keynes Council (MKC), Thames Valley Police (TVP), the Primary Care Trust (PCT), representatives from the local business community, the voluntary sector and central government (as depicted in Figure 6 below).

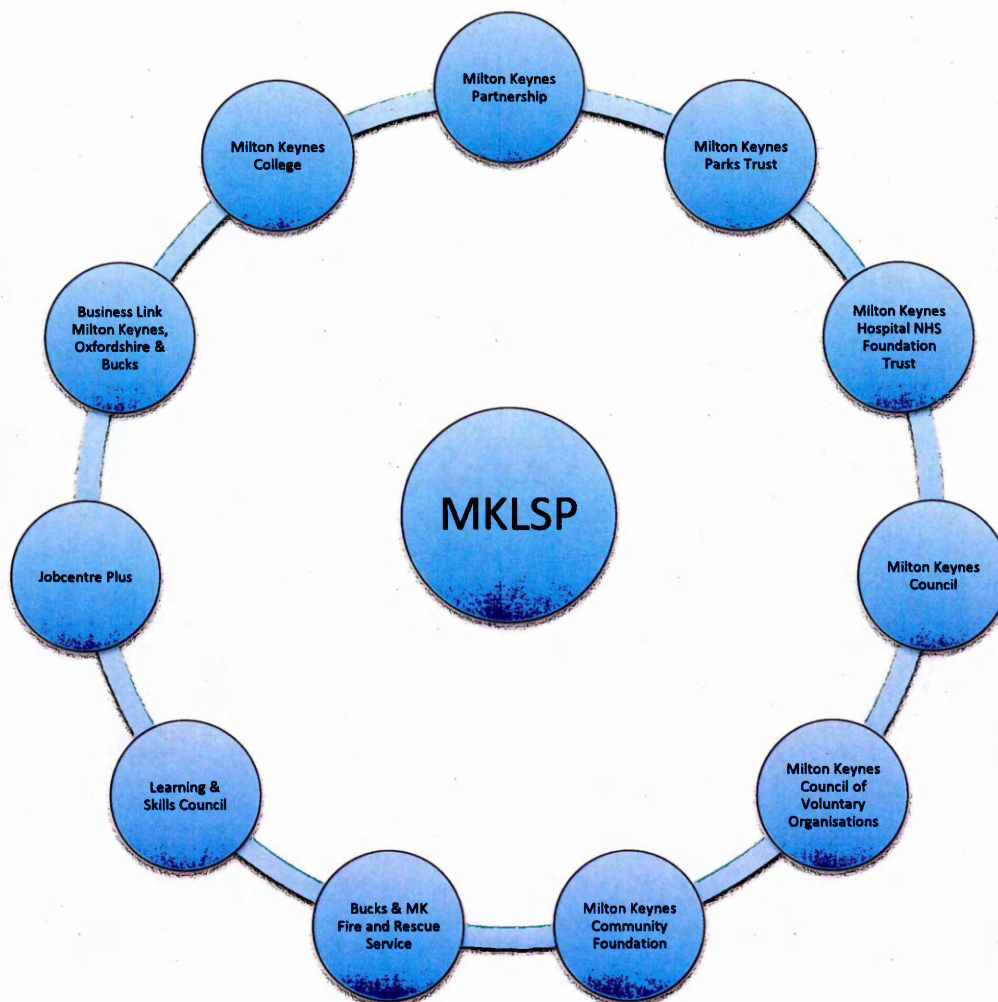


Figure 6 MKLSP Member Organisations (MKLSP 2008).

The MKLSP was responsible for establishing and monitoring the Milton Keynes Sustainable Community Strategy: Our Handbook for Change 2004-2034 (Refreshed June 2008) (MKLSP 2008) which set out the vision for the growth and development of Milton Keynes in light of its identification as the location for major new housing development as part of central government's Sustainable Community Plan (ODPM 2003). This plan anticipated the city doubling in size to approximately 348,810 people by the year 2031 (MKLSP 2008, p. 9). In addition to the contributions from the constituent organisations the Sustainable Community Strategy (MKLSP 2008 p. 13) was based upon a series of consultations with local residents and 'discussions with young people, older people, family groups and faith communities' generating action plans to be refreshed every three years and delivered by a series of six strategic partnerships (as outlined in Figure 7 below).

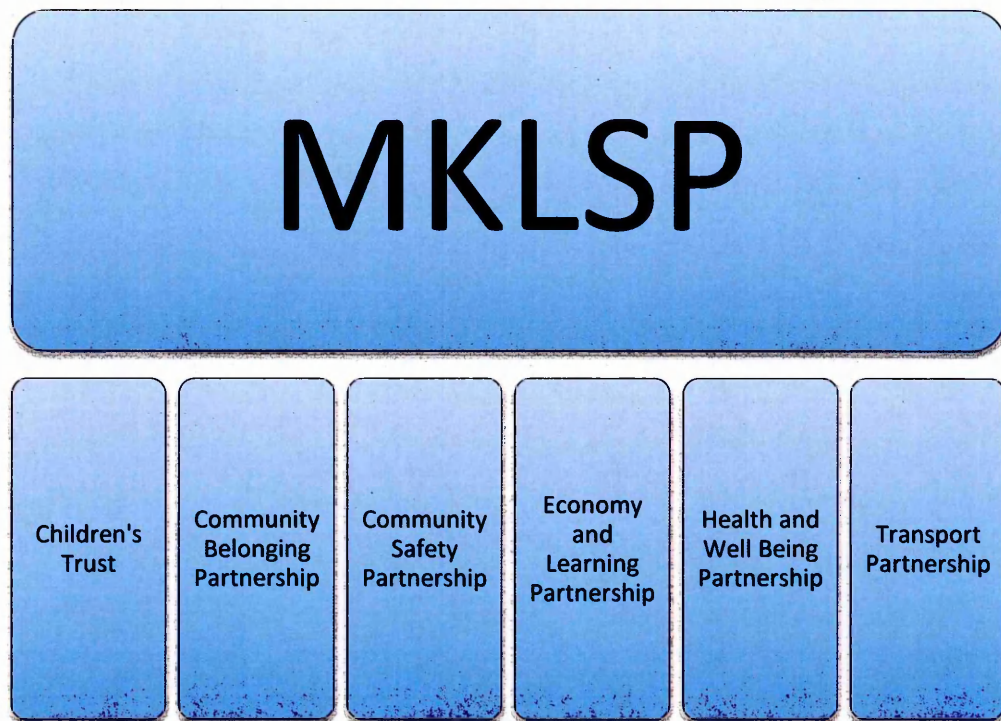
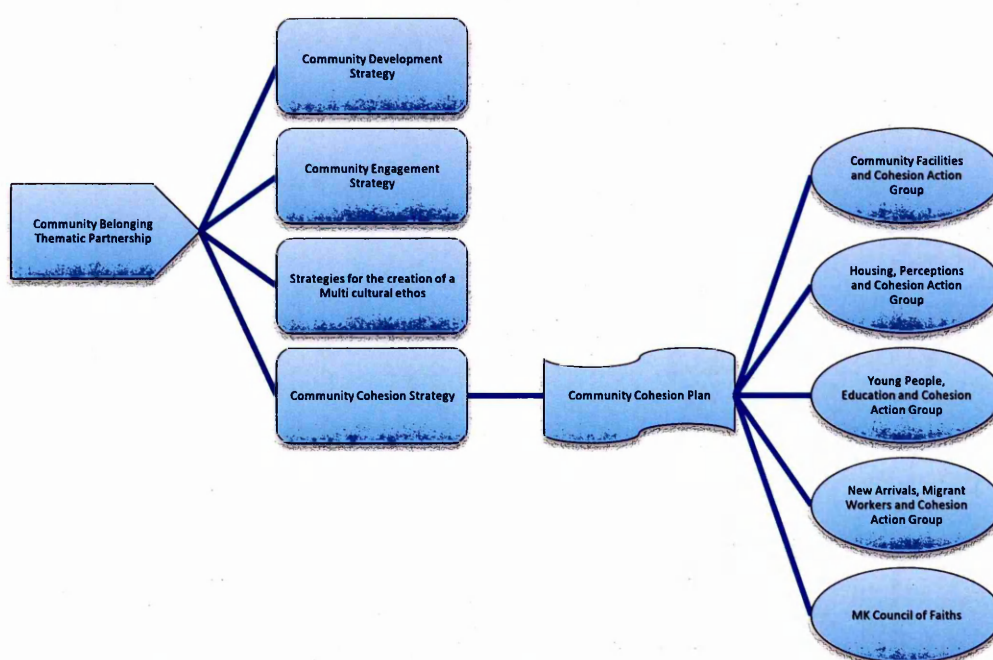


Figure 7 MKLSP Thematic Strategic Partnerships (MKLSP 2008).

The Community Belonging Thematic Partnership was one of these six strategic partnerships. Its membership was formed of relevant public and third sector organisations and it held high-level strategic responsibility for progressing goals around developing a sense of belonging and community cohesion among city residents ensuring that 'all sections of our community get along well together and are able to participate and want to make a positive contribution' (MKLSP 2008, p. 18). It sought to do this by overseeing the development of (as well as the incorporation of existing) key strategies including the community cohesion and engagement strategies and plans that were the operational building blocks for the *Milton Keynes Sustainable Community Strategy 2004-2034 (Refreshed 2008)* (MKLSP 2008).

The *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) was written by consultants ECOTEC, coordinated by the Community Belonging Thematic Partnership and managed by the Cohesion Officer. It was directly informed by the *Sustainable Community Strategy* (MKLSP 2008) which set out the action of 'championing and supporting the delivery of creative approaches to community cohesion, equalities and social inclusion, starting from a comprehensive evidence base and setting targets for our collective response' (MKLSP 2008). At the same time it was also informed by central government guidance and best practice for achieving cohesive communities via the Commission on Integration and Cohesion report entitled *Our Shared Future* (COIC 2007) discussed in Chapter Three. The *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) informed the *Community Cohesion Plan* (MKC 2009) which covered the delivery priorities and targets of the

strategy via measurable outcomes. These outcomes were coordinated by the Community Cohesion Officer and developed by six different projects and working groups (also known as Cohesion 'Action Groups') which sought to bring together various departments and figures from within the local authority working within specific themes such as 'Young People, Education and Cohesion', 'New arrivals and migrant workers' and 'Community Facilities' (as demonstrated by Figure 8 below).



**Figure 8** Flow diagram demonstrating the responsibilities and relationships of the Community Belonging Thematic Partnership.

This account of the local policy-making process suggests a relatively linear flow from high-level strategic partnerships, strategies, implementation plans and action groups. It seems to follow logically that the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is responsible for the *Sustainable Community Strategy* (MKLSP 2008) and the Community Belonging Thematic Partnership. The Community Belonging Thematic Partnership is then responsible for the *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) which is responding directly to the concerns of the *Sustainable Community Strategy* (MKLSP

2008). Finally, the Community Cohesion Officer is tasked with operationalising the *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) (via the *Community Cohesion Plan*, MKC 2009) and does so by constructing the Cohesion Action Groups. While this portrayal is not inaccurate it fails to represent all that was observed taking place prior to the establishment of this architecture. When the participant observation at Milton Keynes Council began, the *Sustainable Community Strategy* (MKLSP 2008) was in the process of being reworked and revised, the Community Belonging Thematic Partnership had not yet been established, the *Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a), *Community Cohesion Plan* (MKC 2009) and Cohesion Action Groups had not yet been written or formed and the Community Cohesion Officer had not yet been appointed. It also fails to reflect the wealth of activity which takes place outside of this top-down model of the *Sustainable Community Strategy* (MKLSP 2008) in areas such as schools, provision for young people and Community Development.

The high volume of activity which could be loosely described as 'multicultural policy-making' was one of the first things that I noticed when I began my participant observation based within Milton Keynes Council. It was apparent that, despite the relatively recent experience of multiculturalism within the city, quite a wide variety of Council teams and departments as well as external agencies and third sector organisations contributed to progressing areas of multicultural policy-making outside of the LSP, the Community Belonging Thematic Partnership and the Community Cohesion Officer. When attempting to follow the traces of multicultural policy through the authority it became clear that the activity was dispersed and somewhat

fragmented in nature and incorporated a far more complicated set of relationships than indicated by the more linear model provided earlier. Local authority approaches to equality, diversity and community cohesion were clearly driven in the first instance by central government directives (such as the *Race Relations Amendment Act 2000* mentioned earlier) and managed centrally by the Corporate Equalities Officer (later changed to the Corporate Equalities and Cohesion Manager) and there was a definite sense of commitment to the core principles of this strategy. There was, however, significantly less commitment to the Preventing Violent Extremism agenda which was also the result of a central government directive, based on the size of the local Muslim population, which will be discussed in Section 5.4. Other elements of local authority activity relevant to multicultural policy-making such as Community Development, new arrivals support, youth work and EMASS – as well as community and voluntary sector activity around community mobilisation and approaches to issues of equality and discrimination – seemingly operated independently of national directives and, based upon my observations, were driven by a real sense of commitment to maintaining the image of Milton Keynes as a diverse and prosperous place ‘known for its diversity’ (MKLSP 2008, p. 34).

Around the same time that my participant observation of Milton Keynes Council’s approaches to multicultural policy-making began the authority was in the process of developing its very first *Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a). This strategy was itself the product of the *Milton Keynes Milton Keynes Sustainable Community Strategy 2004-2034 (Refreshed 2008)* (MKLSP 2008) was to be coordinated by the Cohesion Officer who would be responsible to the Corporate

Equalities Officer (since changed to Corporate Equalities and Cohesion Manager) based within the Chief Executive's Office. The *Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) was intended to represent a coordinated vision for how community cohesion would be mainstreamed across all departments within the organisation and achieved across the city. The absence of this strategy in the early stages and throughout much of my observations was evident in the absence of significant partnership working between departments and the way in which it appeared difficult for different parts of the local authority to acknowledge the potential for cross-over between similar agendas and performance indicators. In the course of my research it became clear that a significant amount of work that could arguably lead to greater levels of cohesion within communities was happening independently of the *Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) and *Community Cohesion Plan* (MKC 2009). This observation was supported by Vicky, a policy-practitioner working in Regeneration, who commented that:

...The (other) problem that we have is duplication, because we're all out there wanting to create sustainable communities, because that's the buzz words, and absolutely we all believe in it, but we're all coming at it from a different angle, and even government sets up different organisations to do the same things ... it's about how do we join all of that together to actually pool our resources, perhaps not do all the duplication.

Here Vicky refers to her own experiences working in regeneration in support of the local authority's *Sustainable Community Strategy* (MKLSP 2008). She observes how the duplication of working practices, goals and funding pools between departments



are diluting the impact of policy initiatives in areas such as regeneration by failing to work together. Vicky seems to attribute this duplication to procedural factors while offering an impression of real commitment to the Sustainable Community agenda by herself and her fellow Council officers. She is critical of government for perpetuating the problem of duplication, but nevertheless appears optimistic that she and her colleagues can overcome these divisions by pooling their resources. Her comments would support earlier suggestions that it was difficult to guarantee consistency and complementarity between the various initiatives and approaches which existed within the local area.

A good example of the way in which the cohesion agenda struggled to bring together the existing work of other departments comes from my observations of the Cohesion Action Groups. Intended to facilitate meaningful exchange and partnership working between various parts of the policy architecture, these were established to deliver the actions outlined in the *Community Cohesion Plan* (MKC 2009) set up along the themes of 'Community Tension Monitoring', 'New Arrivals and Migrant Workers', 'Young People, Education and Cohesion', 'Housing, Perceptions and Cohesion' and 'Community Facilities'. The action groups aimed to mainstream the cohesion agenda by collating existing work and formulating partnerships on future work around specific areas of the *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) between various interested parties within the Council. However, the strategy – and thus its action groups – lacked sufficient resources. As a result of this any work or projects stemming from these action groups could only take place in addition to the officers' existing responsibilities and therefore, perhaps understandably, may not

always have been treated with the highest priority. While those involved in the Cohesion Action Groups I attended did seem committed to community cohesion the challenges of implementing such a far-reaching agenda with limited support seemed to stifle the impact each action group could hope to have.

Having identified and outlined the extensive architecture of local policy structures which exists in Milton Keynes it is possible to begin to identify a shift in focus (echoing the shift in national policy circles discussed in Chapter Three) away from multiculturalist approaches and towards policies centred upon increasing social harmony and community cohesion (see Cantle 2001, COIC 2007).

### **5.3 Neglecting race and multicultural? The focus of local policy upon community and cohesion agendas**

Whereas in the past Milton Keynes had been the site of policies with an explicit focus on issues of race equality such as the *Milton Keynes Council Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008* (MKC 2005) and the *BME Housing and Social Care Strategy 2007-2010* (MKC 2007a), it became increasingly common to see emphasis placed far more heavily upon policies such as the *Sustainable Community Strategy* (MKLSP 2008) and the *Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) which laid greater emphasis on notions of cohesive communities. At the same time as issues of race and multicultural appear to be neglected explicitly within policy they are more commonly used implicitly in agendas such as community cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism. It was common for these agendas, while adopting the rhetoric of approaches for the betterment of local populations and society as a whole, to refer implicitly to the

importance of successfully integrating ethnic, cultural and religious minority groups for these plans to be successful. In the case of the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) agenda the strategy is targeted specifically at Muslim communities within the UK, of which a large proportion belong to a BME group. The next section of this chapter returns to the tensions which emerged as a result of the PVE agenda being focussed solely upon Muslim communities, using insights from David and Ahmad, two local policy-makers who participated in the research project and who worked closely with the implementation of the local authority's community safety, community cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism agendas.

*The Milton Keynes Sustainable Community Strategy 2004-2034 (Refreshed 2008)* (MKLSP 2008) (introduced in Section 5.2) is the strategy for developing a notion of desirable communities and contains a dual purpose. On the one hand it aims to inform and support local policy makers and other interested partners involved in carrying out work relating to the various aspects of development taking place in the city. On the other it constitutes a mission statement, almost a 'marketing' brochure, aimed at current and future residents of the area detailing the vision for what it is hoped Milton Keynes will become in the future. The strategy makes a point of stressing the city's desire to 'pioneer new methods' and to be a city 'where everyone has a say; where communities are actively involved in the workings of the city and help to manage change together' (MKLSP 2008, p. 25). Section 5.4 of this chapter addresses in more detail the challenges related to this approach to community consultation and engagement practices within local policy-making, and the influence such practices can have on the policy process. Clearly the strategy is

simultaneously promotional and aspirational and thus the focus is firmly upon looking towards the future with goals including being; 'famous for the ease with which new citizens, businesses and organisations can arrive, are welcomed and can plug-in to the services and resources of the city'; 'renowned for our flexibility' and 'imaginative, experimental and [will] take intelligent risks to continue to grow and develop' (MKLSP 2008, p. 34). Milton Keynes wishes to be known for its diversity (MKLSP 2008, p. 34). Yet this section argues that Milton Keynes is increasingly following wider national trends in neglecting the need to address inequalities within and between its community groups.

Another major element of the *Sustainable Community Strategy* (MKLSP 2008) is the emphasis placed upon the significance of Milton Keynes as an area typified by growth and change, described as 'a city fuelled by change; nothing has ever stood still in Milton Keynes; it never will. This is what makes the city different from any other' (MKLSP 2008, p. 6), combined with the need to recognise and tackle areas of difficulty affecting its existing residents such as inequalities and the need for regeneration in some areas. The recognition of Milton Keynes as a growth area set within the growth region of the South East of England is significant for this piece of research. This is because constant growth and change was frequently noted by a range of participants from policy-makers to young people as an integral part of the way of life within the city. With this growth has come a substantial increase in the proportion of the population from BME groups. The Strategy notes that the BME population increased from 13.4 per cent of the total population in 2001 to 17.2 per cent in 2006, noting, too, that it will continue to grow (MKLSP 2008, p. 14). Also, this

growth has led to a heightened awareness and concern over community formation and the extent to which new arrivals are able to settle and integrate successfully into civic life. One of the issues worthy of priority attention within the *MK Story of Place* (MKC 2007b) (one of the documents which informed the revisions of the *Sustainable Community Strategy* (MKLSP 2008) in 2008) is the '... need to adjust our activity in response to changing demographics and our increasing diversity. Issues such as the increasing proportion of older people, those from BME communities and non UK nationals must be considered alongside the issues raised by the relatively large proportion of younger people' (MKLSP 2008, p. 16).

The *Sustainable Community Strategy* (MKLSP 2008) lists twelve key requirements for creating sustainable communities, of which the two most relevant to this research are the existence of 'a diverse, vibrant and creative local culture encouraging pride in the community and cohesion within it' as well what is described as a 'sense of place' (although in this context some of the more nuanced considerations surrounding place discussed in Chapter Two are absent). The first of these is significant since it acknowledges the importance of recognising diversity and fostering cohesion within communities, despite the relatively modest size of Milton Keynes and the recentness of its experience of multiculturalism. The second requirement refers to the importance of creating a recognisable identity for the city among its citizens as well as further afield. The approaches to developing this type of inclusive identity are outlined in this chapter while questions around the presence of a shared sense of identity and place attached to Milton Keynes are addressed through the responses of research participants in Chapter Six. The strategy includes a cursory

discussion of the importance of recognising and positively valuing multicultural difference, with the focus firmly upon emphasising commonalities and a shared sense of place. A notable absence from this list of requirements as well as the strategy's discussion of key priorities for Milton Keynes was any mention of the importance of equal opportunities for its citizens.

The nature of this strategy as a 'Handbook for Change' gives the impression of a coordinated approach between different organisations, partnerships and voluntary and community groups pushing forward a shared vision for the future. Clearly the fact that such a strategy (and the partnerships which have been established to progress its action plans) exists is evidence that there is some basis for such an impression. However, it was also noted during fieldwork that the extent to which multicultural policy-making within Milton Keynes can be accurately described as following a linear and coordinated approach is questionable. This chapter goes on to discuss how in many cases it is more complicated than this linear and coordinated model. It does so with the help of commentary from participants from fields such as youth services and education on how some of the local policy initiatives came to fruition outside of – or in conjunction with – higher level local strategy documents such as the *Sustainable Community Strategy* (MKLSP 2008).

The *Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) was aimed primarily at policy-makers, organisations and voluntary and community groups involved in delivering on its objectives as well as the Community Belonging Thematic Partnership to which it reported. The intricacies of tailoring locally based solutions to national-level initiatives are explored in more detail via research data gathered through

observations and semi-structured interviews with policy-makers in the next section of this chapter. The *Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) is significant because it was responsible for further articulating the aims set out in the *Sustainable Community Strategy* (MKLSP 2008) and for informing the *Community Cohesion Plan* (MKC 2009), which outlined how these outcomes were to be measured and achieved. The *Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) outlined the requirements for successful community cohesion within Milton Keynes as 'address[ing] the socio-economic well-being of individuals and communities; generating a sense of commonality and promoting positive relationships between groups; engaging and involving disengaged groups; myth-busting communications; responding to major events presenting a risk to cohesion' (MKC 2008a, p. 10). The stated aim of the cohesion strategy was to build a common understanding of 'what cohesion means – not only for our local communities, neighbourhoods, groups and individuals, but also for our service providers, stakeholders and strategic partners' (MKC 2008a, p. 6). Related to this aim, it was not uncommon during interviews to find policy-makers and practitioners lacking a shared understanding of definitions and appropriate policy approaches to the somewhat elastic terms of multicultural, community and cohesion and so clearly this strategic aim may be more complicated than initially suggested. The elasticity of these and other terms is explored in more detail in the next section of this chapter using insights and comments from fieldwork observations and interviews.

Another aim of the *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a, p. 32) was to '... develop ownership by local people for their respective

neighbourhoods and help different groups to get along well together'. The concern of the strategy with fostering positive relations and interactions within specific neighbourhoods *and* between different 'groups' responded to the emphasis in the national agenda placed on developing stronger attachments to place and greater levels of social capital and bonds among local residents and between different ethnic communities. In seeking to achieve this aim the *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) negotiated some of the challenges and opportunities associated with new cities such as the constant demographic change and the lack, in some cases, of long-established populations. One challenge associated with furthering a community cohesion agenda in Milton Keynes is the physical landscape which is characterised by a grid-road system that was designed to provide an efficient road network and divides the space into estates with clearly defined boundaries. The effect of this landscape on social relations and interactions is discussed in more detail in Chapter Six. The policy approaches of seeking the ownership and attachment of local people to specific neighbourhoods and also attempting to create a recognisable identity for the city among its residents were found to be a source of tension for respondents and will also be discussed further in the next chapter.

The fieldwork data from this project has found the approach of helping different groups to get along well together to be a relatively limited and restrictive way of tackling the issues in some respects as it presupposes the existence of easily definable and manageable groups between whom these interactions can take place. Since its population is typified by a state of constant churn, engaging with



established groups or communities it Milton Keynes was found to be challenging (as is noted in more detail in Section 5.5). Approaches to community engagement in Milton Keynes were based around a number of factors such as neighbourhood, interest, religion, or ethnicity. While the activities identified by the strategy revolved around empowering communities it remained both a challenge and an opportunity to enable the notion of community used to incorporate and acknowledge moments of cohesion or inter-cultural interaction which may be taking place on more natural and informal levels. Community cohesion models seemed limited in their ability to take into account, for example, the convivial encounters that, as noted in Chapter Two, take place in parks, playgrounds and sports clubs (Amin 2002). Instead, Milton Keynes Council preferred actions which could be set out in the operational action plans with more easily measurable indicators. The tensions between policy and practice in relation to multicultural policy-making in Milton Keynes are discussed more fully in the next section.

## **5.4 Emerging disparities between policy and practice around issues of multicultural**

The previous section has noted a focus of the local policy architecture in Milton Keynes upon notions of community and cohesion which largely neglect any overt references to issues of multiculturalism and race equality. There were growing ambiguities and disparities between the text of key strategies and the actual day to day workings of the Council and other agencies as evidenced from both research observations and from interviews with policy-makers and practitioners. As well as identifying emerging ambiguities and disparities between policy and practice, the

same disparities could be identified developing out of the relationship between national and local-level policy agendas, even between different sets of local policies arising from different origins. As well as drawing on interview data, policy examples such as the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) programme (also known simply as 'Prevent') were also used to support the arguments made in this section. Further evidence existed in the form of the persistence of policies within the field of education with an explicit focus on issues of race equality and multiculturalism such as the *Toolkit for Preparing Race Equality Policy for Schools* (EMASS n.d.) and *Strategies for the Creation of a Multicultural Ethos: Guidance for Head teachers, Teachers and Governors* (EMASS n.d.). The disparities between policy and practice were likely both a cause and an effect of the differing interpretations which policy-makers and practitioners involved had over key concepts.

### **Policy concepts: different interpretations**

The lack of consensus which tended to exist around terms such as 'multicultural' and 'cohesion' and the differing perceptions of Milton Keynes as a diverse space among policy-makers and practitioners served to illuminate the tension between policy and practice. The main aim of the *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) was 'to build a common understanding of what cohesion means – not only for our local communities, neighbourhoods, groups and individuals, but also for our service providers, stakeholders and strategic partners'. Yet it was common for this research to encounter degree of uncertainty around the definition, relevance and application (in policy terms) of concepts such as community, multiculturalism and community cohesion during interviews with senior policy-makers and practitioners

from various fields (MKC 2008a, p. 6). This lack of consensus suggested that such a task may be more complicated than the strategy anticipates as these concepts remain fluid and subject to differing interpretations by those responsible for implementing the strategy. So, for example, Ahmad (a senior policy-maker responsible for work around Equalities and Cohesion) commented in response to the question of whether he would describe Milton Keynes as 'multicultural'.

... Um, I don't know if that's an appropriate question because wasn't it kicked out, wasn't multiculturalism something that was around in the '70s? ... (long pause) well MK has a diversity of cultures, faiths, ethnicities ... But multicultural is just one aspect of that isn't it? ... you're asking me does it have many dimensions, many cultures, yeah of course, it also has many faiths and many races, many kind of languages... ... of course it's not mono-cultural ... I mean you just have to look outside ...

His response suggests a struggle between the notion of 'multiculture' as the existence of different cultures or cultural groups within a defined space and an active policy of 'multiculturalism' (as outlined in Chapter Three) of promoting tolerance of difference and the recognition and representation of diversity, along with the associated criticisms that such policies over-emphasise difference and promote division and separation between so called 'groups' of citizens. It is taken for granted by Ahmad that Milton Keynes is not 'mono-cultural' and he almost perceives the line of questioning as unnecessary as, for him, it as an observable fact and not a matter of opinion. This is in contrast to other policy respondents such as David who, when

asked the same question about whether Milton Keynes is multicultural acknowledged the increasing cultural diversity of the city:

... Yes increasingly so, I mean in the 1991 Census I think the MK minority ethnic population was 5.5 per cent, in the 2001 census it was 10.5 per cent so ... although the population has been expanding the proportion, the multicultural proportion has been expanding even more.

He reflected on the fact that the population of Milton Keynes remains predominantly 'White British': "...You still have to bear in mind that over 75 per cent of the population is white so the diversity is not that great it's just grown, it's grown a lot, but it's still predominantly white", in fact the figure is higher, estimated to be 86.5 per cent by Office of National Statistics Mid-Year Population Estimates 2007. Rebecca, a policy-maker working for EMASS echoed David's acknowledgement of the increasing diversity in Milton Keynes, but went further in emphasising that the Council was both aware of and responsive to this fact:

I think the authority is very aware that it is multicultural, and if you look within the Council, and the reason I say that is in doing this job now every meeting that I go to across Children Services or across regeneration is very, very focussed on vulnerable groups, and very, very aware that there are a high number of minority ethnic communities, sub-communities, and overall community, so I really think that there is an awareness within the Council. There's an awareness also because there's quite a lot of data that shows that proportion is growing, so being a New Town it's presumably focussed on

looking at what its community is made of, and how its community keeps changing...

Aisha, a policy-practitioner working in BME Community Development responded to the same question by highlighting the extent to which perceptions of Milton Keynes as multicultural fluctuate based on who you asked and which areas of the city were being discussed when she commented:

If you talk to some of the community groups themselves, and you say to them that we've got a lot of new communities, or it is very multicultural, they'll say 'well no: we're not really that multicultural, when you look at some of the schools, in some of the areas they're very white', but yet if you go to Conniburrow and Fishermead, you realise that some of the schools are probably, what 80 per cent multicultural? So it does depend on which areas you're looking at, some of the newer areas probably aren't so multicultural, if you've got places like Kingsmead, Tattenhoe, very much expensive housing, posh housing and not so mixed groups there, but some of the older areas are very mixed I think.

Aisha highlights a clear sense of the micro-geographies at play within Milton Keynes. In stating that she believed experiences and views of multiculturalism would vary depending on the area of the city she reinforces the arguments made within Chapter Two around the importance of the relationship between place and issues of race and multiculturalism. It is important to note, however, that there were also many newer areas of the city which also experienced degrees of ethnic diversity. This indicated that it was not always as simple as a distinction between older areas which

contained multicultural populations and newer areas which did not but that there were, for Aisha, potentially class divisions between those areas which did and did not contain what she described as 'posh houses'. Ahmad's response above seems to view multiculturalist policies, or the influence of notions of multiculturalism on local policy-making, as an approach that is no longer relevant within contemporary policy-making circles with which he is involved. This assertion also supports the argument put forward in the previous section that terms such as 'multiculture' and its derivatives are seldom used within the field to the degree they once were, indeed they are seen by many involved as out-dated, as in Ahmad's words: "something that was around in the '70s". Community cohesion discourse has provoked similar uncertainties among policy-makers and practitioners tasked with implementing its objectives, as the following comment from David (a member of the Community Safety Team) and, subsequently, from Vicky (a member of the Strategy and Regeneration Department) indicate:

I'm never quite sure what community cohesion means, um is it about a community being able to relate to one another, you know various elements in the community while retaining a separate identity or is it about identities merging? And um, if people preserve separate identities as part of the cohesion agenda there is always room for clash ... for difference of opinion. In a way a healthy community is one where those differences of opinion can exist but they can be resolved by peaceful means.

Further highlighting the uncertainty surrounding the concept, Vicky noted the wide array of activities which she is involved with that could be deemed to be related to

community cohesion, which themselves raised for Vicky a number of questions over what constitutes community cohesion activity. Given the fact that community cohesion is an agenda that is intended to be mainstreamed throughout the various departments of the local authority Vicky's comments seem to suggest a degree of scepticism around the concept of cohesion and the way in which it is implemented by Milton Keynes Council:

I don't suppose that I'm actually building community cohesion when I'm out there working, I'm building community capacity now is that the same thing, who knows? I'm never going to turn anybody away, so is that cohesion? I suppose all the work that we've done has identified needs, now is that cohesion? I don't know. One of those was a group of Asian women who wanted to take up swimming but had some real issues about swimming, sort of dress and the fact that it wasn't a girls only swimming evening, and then some of the white young girls were saying, 'well we'd come to that, because the boys wouldn't take the mickey out of us', is that cohesion? I don't know... I don't know what is or isn't cohesion, and if you've got loads of different people wanting to do it isn't it multicultural rather than cohesion? I don't know how that works. I find it very difficult... I think cohesion for me could be anything about getting young and old together and looking at wider issues such as if I can't get two religious groups in a room how the devil am I supposed to connect those two religious groups plus a transsexual group, plus an elderly group, plus a youth group ... so I suppose I'm guilty of following the line that Milton Keynes Council and maybe the Cohesion Partnership have

taken where they're looking at two things (read: race and faith), and I don't know whether that's right. I'll be questioned on it and I think the partnership needs to be questioned on it more, and more regularly, but I do think Milton Keynes is such a diverse place that actually how much intervention do we need?

The responses from Ahmad, David and Vicky above demonstrate the ambiguities surrounding the somewhat elastic concepts of 'multiculture' and 'community cohesion' among policy makers and practitioners working towards them. These ambiguities highlight the difficulty which exists in progressing strategies like the ones discussed in Section 5.2 which rely on fostering notions such as 'cohesion' when understandings of what these mean and how they are to be achieved are clearly far from straightforward and vary dramatically both from place to place and from policy maker to policy maker. They also highlight the tension identified in Section 5.2 between attempts to develop clear, coherent and linear policy interventions and the notable ambiguities and complexities within the broader policy process, leading to significant disparities between what is written in policy and what is practiced on the ground. In many cases definitions of concepts like community cohesion occur on a national scale and present problems when policy makers attempt to operationalise them at the local level. For example, within Milton Keynes communities are not radically polarised (as argued in community cohesion policy and identified in reports into places such as Bradford, Oldham and Burnley) but rather living together ambivalently. Most of Milton Keynes' BME groups are spread across different areas of the city which contain a number of other ethnic groups and as such levels of



contact between a number of different groups is commonplace (with the older Pakistani and Bangladeshi populations in the Wolverton and Bletchley areas being two possible exceptions). This is addressed in more detail in Chapter Six's discussion of the dynamics of community formation in Milton Keynes. Therefore, it is important when attempting to employ concepts such as 'community cohesion' to acknowledge not only their innate and intentional elasticity and ambiguities but also the tensions which exist between local and national-level policy.

### **Preventing Violent Extremism: a contradiction**

The argument that ambiguities and scepticism exist in the relationship between local and national policy directives in multicultural policy-making can be evidenced from observations of the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) agenda. Milton Keynes Council was able to access three years' worth of PVE or 'Prevent' funding based on the proportion of the population that is Muslim, which in Milton Keynes is 2.34 per cent (ONS 2001). As explained in Chapter Three, this PVE funding has, in turn, been a source of funds for Muslim organisations and communities, since they are deemed to be the most likely 'breeding grounds' for extremism. The negotiation which took place in Milton Keynes around this initiative was particularly complex, because it involved (local) attempts to find ways of continuing to provide support to groups and projects that would have been supported under the older priorities of community cohesion, while also making it necessary to justify the spending in rather different terms. The types of activities funded within Milton Keynes by Prevent unsurprisingly follow similar lines to those outlined in Chapter Three, for example engaging young people; skills development for Imams and community capacity building, all targeted

solely towards Muslims (MKC 2008b). Echoing the critique of national PVE policy in Chapter Three, the shift in emphasis was also seen by David (a senior policy-maker working on issues of crime and Community Safety) to have undermined more inclusive multicultural policy approaches because it originated from issues of division and separation, rather than inclusion based around an acceptance of diversity:

It doesn't create cohesion, Prevent, it's actually quite a dangerous thing ... it's not the way that you promote cohesion. You can't have a cohesion strategy with no resources behind it and have a Prevent strategy with loads of money which is only geared to one community...

The Prevent strategy provided the research with a useful insight into some of the tensions that arise when sensitive national level objectives must be delivered locally. During my participant observation in Milton Keynes Council I became aware of the ways in which national-level initiatives such as Preventing Violent Extremism (which were seemingly incompatible with wider work being done within Milton Keynes to promote healthy and sustainable communities) were responded to locally. Other responses relating to the impact and influence of the PVE agenda upon community cohesion were also quite sceptical as Ahmad echoed David's concerns about the potential of PVE to exacerbate divisions between the local Muslim and non-Muslim populations:

My own perspective has been to keep them both separate. I have not even mentioned it in the Cohesion strategy. I have given it a line, but a lot of Councils have put it in the role of the cohesion officer but we've not done that here. It's not the same thing. Really they should have called it 'Community

Capacity Building for Muslims'. That would have been a lot easier to deal with for people like me. They shouldn't really have called it Preventing Violent Extremism because as a local authority there is very little you can do. That's got to be in the care of the forces, the enforcement agencies, what are we supposed to do?

Ahmad's comments signify his wariness over the PVE agenda and its potentially counterproductive effects upon the sustainable communities and community cohesion agendas which he was also responsible for progressing. The Prevent agenda was effectively superimposed onto existing and (in the opinion of local policy participants like Ahmad and David) more appropriate local solutions to community development and community cohesion as a result of an attempt by central government to target counter-terrorism resources towards a specific community. Both Ahmad and David explain that in their experience the Prevent agenda was damaging attempts at fostering cohesion by creating divisions and resentment between communities on the basis of a perceived imbalance of resources in favour of the Muslim community. Ahmad justified giving the PVE agenda little attention in the *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) as an attempt to minimise the disruption caused by an area of policy that he is aware is sensitive.

### **Schools and EMASS: 'Old' policy formations**

Work undertaken in the field of education by schools and the Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Support Service (EMASS) provides another useful example of the disparity between policy and practice around local approaches to multiculturalism. Despite the shift towards strengthening communities and cohesion in wider local

policy agendas, policies interested in multicultural and race equality persist on the peripheries where they are, arguably, more heavily valued in ground-level practices seeking to tackle patterns of inequality in educational attainment among certain ethnic groups. While the focus of high-level strategic documents such as the *Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) and the *Sustainable Communities Strategy* (MKLSP 2008, p. 18) was upon creating a place where 'all sections of our community get along well together and are able to participate and want to make a positive contribution', the work conducted in the field of education remains focused on raising attainment, as Rebecca from EMASS explains:

The very strong focus that we have to have is narrowing the attainment gaps with the underachieving BME groups. Now that's always been the case, but it's become much more clear how focussed we have to be on that... the biggest concern is at GCSE level 2008 there was really a drop and a widening of the gap for Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black African children, particularly Bangladeshi and Pakistani children, so that's the area that we really have to focus on this year.

The Children and Young People's Service and EMASS have produced and continue to use a range of guidance documents relating to race, multicultural and ways to manage Milton Keynes' increasingly diverse population. These include the *Toolkit for Preparing Race Equality Policy for Schools* (EMASS n.d.), *Strategies for the Creation of a Multicultural Ethos: Guidance for Head teachers, Teachers and Governors* (EMASS n.d.), *Guidance for dealing with Racist Incidents in Schools* (EMASS 2010a), *Equality & Diversity in Milton Keynes: The Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Support*

*Service* (EMASS 2007) as well as *Guidance for the Assessment of Newly Arrived Pupils Key Stage 1 & 2* (EMASS 2010b) and *Guidance for the Assessment of Newly Arrived Pupils Key Stage 3 & 4* (EMASS 2010c).

By concentrating on attainment, schools and EMASS rely heavily on identifying disparities and attainment gaps between pupils from different racial, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds and are dependent on measures targeted at addressing issues such as race equality in order to close these gaps. Yet with such measures becoming less common at the strategic level (for example substitution of the *Milton Keynes Council Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008* with the *Comprehensive Equality Scheme 2010-2012*) issues of multicultural, race and equality are addressed explicitly less and less and a disparity emerges between the needs that are being identified on the ground and the targets and actions that are being established as part of the coordinated local approach to community-making.

Initiatives such as the *Toolkit for Preparing Race Equality Policy for Schools* (EMASS n.d.), contain quite a narrow scope for action (in that they are focused solely on how to prepare a Race Equality Policy) and are aimed at a very specific audience (in this case schools, head teachers and school governors) in both understanding and application, arising from the need to create practical strategies to tackle specific issues. These types of initiatives are worth acknowledging since they are a legitimate part of the multicultural policy landscape within Milton Keynes. Yet, unlike the *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a) for example, they were not part of any coordinated local approach to community building but rather were the result of other direct (typically national-level) duties or requirements which have

then been incorporated into local-level operations. However, it is important to recognise that these exist within a wider national policy context of documents such as *Our Shared Future* (COIC 2007) discussed in detail in Chapter Three), as well as the wider local policy context discussed in Section 5.2. This is because this recognition highlights the fact that initiatives and approaches exist outside of the coordinated approach mentioned earlier in this section. These initiatives also highlight the persistence of policy dealing explicitly with issues of equality and race where they have largely become implicit or avoided in wider policy discourse in this area. Fieldwork data suggested that another source of tension in the policy process – related to those outlined in this section between policy and practice – was the way in which community engagement and consultation practices were approached in the shaping of local policy practice.

## **5.5 Managing multicultural: community engagement and consultation in new city spaces**

Almost all local initiatives relating to notions of community-making are required to perform some sort of public engagement and consultation in order to demonstrate that they are responding to the views of the local population. Community engagement activities are intended to help policy-makers consider the needs and wants of local residents, widely acknowledged as an integral part of the policy-making process. However, they are not without their critics (DCLG 2006; 2008). Ahmad commented in great detail on the costs associated with conducting community consultations as part of the policy-making process. He noted that, while consultation and engagement is viewed as an integral part of the process, the

amount of resource that goes into ensuring that the views of the local communities are taken into account is rarely acknowledged:

Even holding a meeting it costs quite a lot of money, people don't realise, to create a formal moment at some point in time; it costs an enormous amount of money. When you factor those costs in, I don't want to be negative, but if people want things to be transparent and open there is a price to be paid.

Ahmad's view was that it would often be possible to achieve better results without always going through these consultation processes. Instead he recommended commissioning projects through a normal procurement process. However, he acknowledged that in some cases, such as the PVE agenda, subjects were sensitive enough that it would be unwise not to conduct some form of public engagement. This suggests that policy makers (even those sceptical of the benefit of consultation processes) appear aware of the sensitive nature of diversity policy and its 'dangers' and recognise the need to consult with the public on how they should approach these issues (which also fits into wider debates around the need to see local government as a form of community governance see e.g. Cochrane 2004; Stoker 2004). Observations from engagement events, such as those which took place for the *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Strategy* (MKC 2008a), suggested that in many cases the approach and policy directions and strategies were actually already established and that the engagement event was somewhat mechanistic and more focused on securing community buy-in than input, particularly around sensitive areas such as the PVE agenda. In the case of the community cohesion agenda, policy-makers and practitioners gave the impression that they believed in, and were

committed to, the value of community support for a strategy which they themselves believed in. In the case of the Prevent agenda however, the criticism around how it was to be implemented and its potentially divisive impact gave the impression that engagement with communities was more as a result of the obvious sensitivity of the issues rather than a wholehearted commitment to the issue.

The disparities and complexities identified in Section 5.4 of this chapter between policy and practice have led to the local authority adopting a distinct approach of managing multicultural. Essentially this means that the rigidity of the policy architecture within Milton Keynes combined with the expectation for community engagement and consultation has resulted in the local authority becoming eager to engage (and be seen to be engaging) with all sections of its population, particularly those belonging to ethnic, religious and cultural minority groups. However, this proved more challenging in the context of Milton Keynes where structures of community representation were relatively under-developed. Ahmad reflected back on his previous role in the North West of England and how he observed BME communities there to be settled and long established, thus making engaging and holding a dialogue with them relatively straight-forward. He described the way that it was possible to hold an annual conference and invite all of the BME communities of the area with the knowledge that they would not have changed dramatically since the previous meeting:

The population changes here quite rapidly so you don't really have a mass of people who have established themselves and organised themselves that you need to respond to, you don't have that here.



In his previous role it had been possible, in Ahmad's view, to discuss issues at the beginning of the year with a set of communities and return to the same individuals at the end of the year to evaluate progress. He contrasted this scenario with the challenge of understanding, responding and designing services with BME (and wider) communities in Milton Keynes in mind, where they are unable to predict who would participate to any degree of certainty. The scenario Ahmad describes, where little input is received from the newly arrived until they have been settled and have organised themselves into associations, has resulted in the Council finding itself in a perpetual game of 'catch-up'. By basing their decisions on population estimates and consultations that they know are going to have a very short shelf life they struggle to engage effectively with the population they serve. As a result it was common in Milton Keynes for policy-makers to rely on what they described as their 'informal networks' to keep up-to-date and engaged with the city's communities (both new and old). Importantly these networks relied on the leaders of established community organisations and associations and so were, in fact, relatively formal in nature.

In addition to the use of 'informal networks', the ever-changing nature of the population in Milton Keynes resulted in local authority attempts to simplify the engagement process and 'manage' multiculturalism. One example of these attempts can be found in the establishment of the MK Council of Faiths (MKCoF). Described as existing to 'formally represent faith communities ... made up of elected faith leaders from the nine largest faiths in Milton Keynes' - identified to be Buddhism (0.36 per cent of the population), Christianity (65.54 per cent of the population), Hinduism (1.25 per cent of the population), Judaism (0.23 per cent of the population), Islam

(2.34 per cent of the population), Sikhism (0.38 per cent of the population), Zoroastrianism, Baha'ism and Jainism (the last three of which are so small in population nationally that individual figures were not collected in the 2001 Census, but nevertheless have a representative on the MKCoF). Its mission statement asserts that it seeks to 'promote community cohesion throughout the Borough's faith communities, build capacity for the MK religious community to engage with formal decision making structures ... and initiate programmes that will further the well-being of faith communities in Milton Keynes' (MKCoF website, [www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/equalities](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/equalities)). The idea is that the MKCoF will encourage increased participation and engagement with faith communities in Milton Keynes, something which was lacking prior to its establishment. It meets regularly and brings active individuals from the city's faith groups together to participate in a regular dialogue which was not already taking place on a formal level.

However, this body can also be understood as an example of an attempt by policy-makers to simplify engagement practices in order to be able to show that it is engaging with religious groups. Attempting to fix what is fluid by engaging with 'leaders' of community organisations and associations as a way of ascertaining the views of an entire population can be problematic, not least when it is acknowledged that individuals cannot be easily categorised as belonging to one group or another. Evidence suggests that they frequently do not fit into the rigid categories ascribed or belong to more than one 'group' at a time, as highlighted in Chapter Three's discussion of notions of community. Questions can legitimately be asked, for example, of how and by whom faith leaders can be elected to represent their faiths

as part of the MKCoF, how the different denominations within the major religions within the city are represented, as well as, crucially, the extent to which a shared religious belief among a group of individuals translates to shared beliefs on other issues relating to policy decisions (and therefore the feasibility of one member of a faith group representing the opinions of others within the local area).

The MKCoF characterises an approach to community engagement which is typical of community cohesion policy. This point is particularly relevant in the context of this research into Somali and Ghanaian communities and Chapter Six elaborates on the series of diverse and complicated sets of religious practices and preferences identified within these two migrant groups. Under these circumstances representatives and leaders speak, to an extent, for their group or congregation but to what democratic extent is not clear in Milton Keynes. This is not to deny the important role that key individuals play in organising, mobilising and engaging with local policy infrastructures on behalf of their group or community. Given the limitations noted and the formalised manner in which the local authority's inherent structural imperatives oblige it to engage with the local populations, such individuals can prove crucial to maintaining a positive relationship between the community they belong to and the local authority and local third sector organisations such as the Milton Keynes Community Foundation which awards grants to 'strengthen local communities, create opportunities and tackle issues of disadvantage and exclusion' ([www.mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk](http://www.mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk)).

This raises questions about the impact of community consultation and engagement practices in local multicultural policy and local policy more generally,

specifically around the extent to which these measures solicit a comprehensive understanding of the opinions of a representative cross-section of all residents within the local area. One policy-maker interviewed was concerned about the potential for engagement practices to be dominated by those savvy or motivated enough to get involved, while other voices are either not spoken or not heard by those in powerful policy positions:

... It's always a problem because the people that shout loudest tend to get heard. If you look at the way that Council or Police services run it tends to be skewed towards the people that make the most noise to a degree. Actually getting at those that really don't have a voice is much more difficult ...

David raised concerns over community engagement practices, specifically of relying upon speaking to religious and community leaders in order to gain an account of the views of the communities in question. These concerns were also identified by national-scale community cohesion policy (such as Cantle 2001 and COIC 2007) outlined in Chapter Three and other debates over the pitfalls of policies of 'multiculturalism' presented in Chapter Two. Understandings of community engagement practices in Milton Keynes are addressed in more detail in Chapter Six based on empirical findings from observations of engagement practices between Milton Keynes Council, its external partners and bodies and the local BME communities. However, it is important to note that in policy terms – as David points out above - community engagement, while a regular feature of all local policy-making, is far from straightforward and often limited in its ability to capture the

views of the local population where there is an assumption that groups of people can be easily identified and defined based on one or two shared characteristics.

As noted above in relation to religious leaders, the leaders of community organisations and associations also obviously play a very important role in voicing the views and experiences of their members and (as becomes clear in Chapter Six) may often be a vital link between migrant populations and the local authority and other statutory bodies and support agencies. Without these key individuals performing the roles that are expected and required by local policy-makers, the levels of bridging social capital and local political influence would be significantly diminished. Yet, the reliance on a few individuals being able to speak for the views of an entire community or group of people may also cause a misrepresentation of the views of a large proportion of the local population and lead to policy makers failing to grasp the complexities which often exist within a group or community. For example, it is easy to underestimate, as discussed in Chapter Six, the dramatically varied set of characteristics which exist within the Ghanaian and Somali populations in terms of religion, language, nationality, motivations for – and trajectories of – migration to Milton Keynes, and their economic positions once settled. Also noted within Chapter Six are the different spaces that each group settled in throughout the city. The reliance on a small number of community representatives is particularly problematic within Milton Keynes experiencing continuous growth and change in its population is always going to be a challenge. As Ahmad has noted earlier, the presence of an ever-growing and changing city both in terms of the range of population diversity in terms of nationality, ethnicity, culture and religion, as well as

the physical environment itself, complicates matters of community engagement.

These challenges are considered more fully in Chapter Six.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter began by outlining the recent and extensive response of Milton Keynes and its local authority to its increasingly multicultural population, considering how the development of this response could be viewed as a reflection of the authority's commitment to diversity. It then evidenced the way in which local policy had echoed the shift among national-level initiatives away from addressing issues of race and multiculturalism and towards a focus on sustainable and cohesive communities. This shift in emphasis highlighted in many cases the dispersed and fragmented nature of the approaches. It also underscored the tensions between some of the different local and national agendas which are enacted as well as the disparity between local community policy and day-to-day operations within the Council, along with differing perceptions of Milton Keynes as a diverse and multicultural space. It suggested that the tensions outlined have led to what was defined as an approach of managing multiculturalism whereby the local authority sought to engage with BME communities via the leaders of established organisations and associations. This was seen as a response to the challenges presented by the fluidity that was identified within local populations and was done in order to deal with these challenges in the structured way that works most easily for bureaucracies. In doing so within the context of a new city space like Milton Keynes (where the population is experiencing constant growth and change) the local authority ran the risk of misrepresenting the views of its local population.

The findings from the research in this chapter indicate the challenges facing Milton Keynes Council in involving its increasingly diverse population in the local politics of Milton Keynes and encouraging the sense of belonging and attachment to the city that it outlines in its strategies, despite the fluid nature of these populations and the competing attachments which exist to forms of community not based around locality. The evidence suggests that new city spaces like Milton Keynes typified by growth and change offer the opportunity to critically evaluate the ways in which local government views and engages with their local populations with an emphasis on appreciating the fluidity which may exist behind the labels attached to certain 'communities'. This fluidity, the heterogeneous nature of communities which are often viewed and treated as fixed and the various attachments and identities which accompany these will be explored in more detail in Chapter Six.

## 6. Community and processes of migratory settlement in new city spaces

---

### 6.1 Introduction

As more areas outside of the large industrial towns and cities become increasingly ethnically diverse and experience a more multicultural population it becomes important to understand the ways in which 'communities' come to be formed and used in these new contexts by community leaders and local policy-makers mobilising senses of belonging and seeking to represent and engage with these communities. This chapter argues that the multifaceted nature of (particularly BME) communities is not accurately represented in local policy making in Milton Keynes, yet current processes of community representation and engagement mean that policy emerges as if it were. This chapter expands on discussion in Chapter Five of local authority community engagement strategies and how these affect (and are affected by) the dynamics of community formation and community representatives. It also builds on and develops the theoretical arguments put forward in Chapter Two around the role of 'place' and multicultural conviviality in 'race' and ethnic relations research. It does so using evidence gathered from semi-structured interviews and focus groups as well as field observations conducted in Milton Keynes.

The first section of this chapter demonstrates how the constant growth and change experienced in the new city space(s) of Milton Keynes – and the effect of



these changes on its population demographic – helps to challenge traditional notions of BME communities as relatively fixed in local policy-making processes of community engagement identified by Jahn-Kahn (2003, p. 41). The next section argues that when engaging with community leaders and representatives local authority engagement structures struggle to appreciate the diversity that exists within group labels such as 'BME', 'black', 'Muslim', 'Christian', 'Ghanaian' and 'Somali'. As a result, this research suggests that significant attempts are made to 'make up communities' via processes of 'strategic essentialism' (see Cochrane and Newman 2009 in Mooney and Neal 2009; Spivak 1988), both by individuals acting as community leaders as well as by Council officers. These acts of making-up communities have resulted in a distorted representation of (and in some cases fragmentation within) what have traditionally been viewed and treated as relatively fixed and homogenous groups. The third section looks at the impact of the urban landscape of Milton Keynes upon its different populations and communities, particularly the extent to which it divides communities of belonging and locality. Given these findings the fourth section argues that despite some of the challenges presented by the urban environment Milton Keynes experiences a state of 'living together, apart'. Interactions take place regularly (particularly amongst young people) within a context of ambivalent, intermittent and negotiated relations encompassing both mixing and non-mixing between those from different backgrounds as occasions and circumstances dictate. The chapter concludes that it is necessary for policy-makers and practitioners to move away from approaches which treat certain populations as relatively fixed and homogenous groups and towards those which appreciate the shared bonds, but also acknowledge the inherent fluidity,

of individual identities. The belief is that this will contribute towards a more comprehensive understanding of local populations, more meaningful engagement practices and more effective social inclusion and community cohesion initiatives.

## **6.2 A community of communities? Acknowledging the complexity of BME communities in Milton Keynes**

Previous chapters have shown that Milton Keynes contains an increasingly multicultural population. Evidence in this chapter demonstrates that the Ghanaian and Somali migrant communities are more complex and heterogeneous than is sometimes assumed by local and national governments and the wider public. Evidence demonstrates how the diversity of backgrounds, experiences and identities among Milton Keynes' residents helps to challenge notions of fixed communities in regards to the traditional models of community engagement and representation by recognised 'leaders' identified in Chapter Two. The development of new residential areas have, in turn, led to new communities of locality, alongside on-going growth in communities of belonging, as more formal community associations develop based around the ethnicities, nationalities and religious practices of Milton Keynes' residents. The multitude of different individual identities, senses of belonging and community attachments expressed by participants reflect Parekh's (2000a, p. 340) notion of a combination of 'communities of citizens' with 'communities of communities', outlined in Chapter Two.

One of the aims of this research is to investigate the ways in which multiculturally constituted communities become established in new urban spaces. Its focus on the Ghanaian and Somali populations was intended to help deconstruct the

notion of 'Black African' as a homogenous category through the examination of the differences, difficulties, commonalities and successes associated with their distinctive experiences. The broad assumptions around which the project developed distinguished rather simplistically between the two populations. The Ghanaian residents were assumed to be reasonably affluent and well established, having followed a common migratory pattern (whether moving out from London in a second wave or arriving directly from Ghana as economic migrants) and remaining well-connected through a range of formal and informal associations (see, Henry and Mohan 2003, Mohan 2006). By contrast the expectation was that the Somali residents would be less affluent, more recently settled and usually having arrived seeking refugee status (see Sporton, Valentine and Nielsen 2006; Sporton and Valentine 2007). Similarly, it was assumed that Ghanaian settlement patterns would be distributed, with no particular concentrations in specific neighbourhoods, while Somali people would be more concentrated into the relatively deprived central estates of the city.

### **Ghanaian and Somali communities in Milton Keynes: complex, fractured and cohesive**

Fieldwork observations confirmed that Ghanaian and Somali communities are heterogeneous, made up of overlapping and distinctive groupings. They are not fixed, arriving from outside to settle in a new space, but rather to a large extent begin to define themselves in that space – reflecting a wide array of socio-economic and migratory experiences as well as intersecting with local political and social networks as noted in Chapter Two by writers such as Massey (1991) and Brah (1996). The populations of each group are constantly being changed and reshaped as a result

of a multiplicity of on-going migrations from Ghana and Somalia respectively (often via London whether first or second generation, or from more northern cities, such as Sheffield in the case of Somalis) as well as from a range of European countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. In other words, these are communities in the process of being made in place, rather than arriving fully formed. Their local experience in Milton Keynes is also influenced by what are often complex patterns of movement via different parts of the UK and Europe as much as any inherent set of linkages back to any particular 'homeland'. For example, of the Somali young people who took part in the focus groups only one was born in Somalia. Another four were born in the Netherlands, two in Sweden and two in Norway. Of the Ghanaian young people interviewed none were born in Ghana. One was born in the Netherlands; eight were born and raised in London before moving to Milton Keynes (including two that spent significant time growing up in the Netherlands and one who spent six years in Ghana). One was born and raised in Germany until he was ten before moving to Milton Keynes and the other six were born and raised in Milton Keynes. The variety of experiences among the young people who participated in the focus groups speaks to the inherently fluid nature of the communities more broadly.

It was commonplace during the focus groups to encounter discussions (and even friendly 'banter' and competitiveness) between the participants regarding their migratory experiences and histories including their fluctuating language proficiencies and attachment to the 'traditional' cultures and customs of their parent's homeland, in contrast to those of the countries in which they have lived. There were also

discussions around conceptions and degrees of belonging to one's ethnic group in relation to these migratory experiences. As part of a (predominantly Ghanaian) church based focus group I spoke to Janice, a twenty two year old Ghanaian born and raised in London prior to living for several years in the Netherlands before settling with her family in Milton Keynes when she began secondary school. Janice reflected on how her background shaped her identity as follows:

People look at me and think that because I can't speak Ghanaian, and loads of other people could, they saw me as less authentic... But it doesn't make me, being Dutch as well, it doesn't make me less Ghanaian than you, it's really silly to think that. We (she and her brothers) really should learn (a Ghanaian language) but...

It is clear that while some members of her community distinguish between those who can and cannot speak Ghanaian languages and relate this to their authenticity as Ghanaians, Janice feels comfortable identifying as both Ghanaian and Dutch. Indeed later she also comments on how she also feels quite British and how she is comfortable negotiating all of these identities at various times and in various contexts as she deems appropriate. Janice's comments are important as they provide evidence of the 'capably managed hybrid identities' discussed by Brah (1996, p. 242) in Chapter Two which occur within what she defines as 'diaspora space', where the entanglement and intersectionality of shared lived experiences occurs in places with multicultural populations. Janice and her brother do not believe their inability to speak Ghanaian languages should prevent them from considering themselves (or others from considering them) authentically Ghanaian; they both expressed a desire

to learn at some stage in order to keep the Ghanaian aspect of their identity alive and pass it on to their children. Timothy (an eighteen year old of Ghanaian origin born in London before moving to Milton Keynes when he was six) and Justin (an eighteen year old of Ghanaian origin born in London before moving to the Netherlands when he was seven and later settling in Milton Keynes for secondary school) both discussed how being friends with Charles (an eighteen year old of Ghanaian origin who had been born and raised in Germany until he was ten before moving to Milton Keynes) had made them more conscious of the fact that they didn't understand any Ghanaian languages. Justin commented that: "he can speak German and Twi as well! I wanna learn it because I feel left out" and Timothy noted how it was strange because: "he (Charles) will come to my house and have a full on conversation in Twi with my mum, he knows it a lot better than I do, so there will be some things that he will say and I just won't understand it".

The comments made by Janice, Timothy and Justin suggest they are involved in a process of negotiating a more contingent identity than was seen as typical or expected by members of the Ghanaian community (particularly by elders) or someone from outside the community, such as a local policy-maker – a more subtle form of exclusion from within their 'group' between insiders and outsiders. Despite Janice's and Justin's multi-stepped migration they remain connected to their Ghanaian roots, while aware that some of their fellow Ghanaians question their authenticity. Akosua (a sixteen year old girl of Ghanaian origin who was born and raised in Milton Keynes) described how she wanted to carry on her Ghanaian culture but found it difficult since it was not typical in her home:

When you've got someone like my mum, she's like so British, she doesn't wear [kente] cloth<sup>1</sup>, she doesn't do any of that, not at all, she doesn't go Ghana parties nothing, like she's not fresh at all! ... She cooks Jollof rice<sup>2</sup> and kenkey<sup>3</sup> sometimes but that's about it, but then, like, she won't teach me the language as well. I want to carry it on to my children as well, I want them to know but she didn't want me to like be fully into it, but I didn't really understand.

The pressure of belonging and the expectation of what makes a person (in this case) more or less authentically Ghanaian, exerted from within – as well as upon – the community, is discussed in more detail in Section 6.3. It is important to note that these identities are far from homogenous reflecting differences such as their varying socio-economic status, nationalities, age and gender. In turn these will undoubtedly shape the views and practices of those individuals, and likely those of their wider community as a whole.

The importance of the now increasingly common wider European connection among African migrants was also apparent among members of the Somali community. Interviews suggested that the families of many of the Somali young people that moved to Milton Keynes did so because they were encouraged to join friends and family who had already settled and would espouse the perceived benefits in doing so. When asked why he moved to Milton Keynes, Bilaal (a sixteen year old Somali boy born in the Netherlands before moving directly to Milton Keynes in 2000) commented:

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kente\\_cloth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kente_cloth)

<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jollof\\_rice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jollof_rice)

<sup>3</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenkey>

My mum was planning to move to London, but then the Council offered her a house here so she took it...I didn't know I thought we were going to London and next thing I know I am here ...

He later added:

My mum wanted to move here because everyone was saying really positive things about MK and most of the family had moved down here anyway. The rest of the family would be telling her, everyone has moved down here, why don't you? My mum came here for about a year on holiday and she liked it so she brought the family down here.

The decisions of parents were also behind the move of Iqra to Milton Keynes (a fifteen year old Somali girl who was born and raised in Sweden until she was ten, later moving to Nottingham for three and a half years before the move to Milton Keynes):

**Jamie:** So why do you think your mum wanted to move here?

**Iqra:** I don't know, she didn't want to stay in Sweden, she got tired of it and she wanted to come to Nottingham because of her friend... I didn't want to move here. My mum and her mum (referring to Imaani, another focus group participant), that's the only reason we came here, so if they (Imaani's family) wasn't here we would have stayed in Nottingham.

**Jamie:** And you would prefer to live in Nottingham?



**Iqra:** (deep breathe) 50/50 – because here there are bare (a lot of) Somalis, it's not only Jamaicans; in Nottingham like six families are Somalis and the rest are Jamaican.

**Jamie:** And that is a good thing about MK?

**Iqra:** So you've got your family here, every Somali has their family here...

**Jamie:** And what is the other side of the 50/50?

**Iqra:** I'm not trying to say MK is bad, there is nothing bad about it. I just have more friends there (Nottingham).

Offering his take on the decisions of Somalis to live in Milton Keynes, Hakim, the head of the Milton Keynes Somali Community Association, reiterated the influence of chain-migration discussed by Bilaal and Iqra. Hakim also introduced the idea that perceived similarities between Milton Keynes and previous places of settlement such as Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands, as well as the nomadic nature of Somalis were other potential motivating factor in migration trajectories, commenting:

**Hakim:** Why did they choose to live here? Nobody knows. I think it is similar to the area they have moved out of. So anybody who has moved here from Sweden will often say 'wow this looks like Sweden' or anybody that moves here from Holland will say 'this looks like Holland'.

**Jamie:** Milton Keynes or England?

**Hakim:** No Milton Keynes. They will say 'no I like this place it is cool and calm and everyday there are people coming in'. Now we realise there are people moving out and going to Coventry etc. The reason why is not because MK is bad, it's because basically Somalis, they move a lot, and if you go back culturally we are nomads and we have camels, goats, sheep and they move wherever the rain is, and so always they move and moving is part of life. So (in Somalia) everybody has a mobile house which they can easily dismantle and easily erect ... so culturally its easier for the Somali guy to move, although they are in MK they are all aware of different places and they have a hobby to move around and come back, so you will see yesterday he was in Bristol he doesn't mind, stay two days and then coming back, and then tomorrow he is going to Manchester and is coming back and he knows the community there ... they have those connections.

Among Somali young people there was little commitment to long term settlement in Milton Keynes although some acknowledged that it was a 'nice place to live' in terms of safety, access to local facilities and proximity to fellow countrymen. Anwar (a seventeen year old Somali boy who was born and raised in Norway, before moving to Sheffield when he was six for a year and then moving to Milton Keynes) explained how he would describe himself and his background:

It depends. If I am in London and like my cousin's friend asks me where I am from I would say Milton Keynes because I think they mean where are you from in England. But if I am on holiday somewhere and someone from that country asks me 'where are you from?' I would just say 'England'. If it's someone in MK and they ask me 'where are you from?' I would probably say 'Somalia or Norway' because I am in Milton Keynes.

Anwar makes a clear distinction between his ethnic origins and where he lives depending on the context in which the question is asked. His response echoed several other young Somalis who had not been born or raised in the UK and as such felt more strongly attached to where they had been born and/or grown up. Nevertheless they made the significance of their Somali backgrounds to their identities quite clear. Aideed (a seventeen year old boy of Somali origins who was born in Somalia but grew up in Sweden before moving to Coventry for a 'little while' before arriving in Milton Keynes six months prior to our focus group) felt that identifying as Swedish, Dutch or Norwegian was out of the question. As he put it: "...the only time I would consider myself Swedish would be if I had blonde hair, blue eyes and white skin". Despite these quite complicated and negotiated practices there seemed to be a perception that an attachment to the UK, or a British identity, was more attainable for a Somali young person than the earlier example of a Swedish one with the connotations of a population where everyone has: "blonde hair, blue eyes and white skin". There was also a degree of attachment to Milton Keynes which was viewed as a desirable place to live given its relatively low crime rates, good shopping facilities and the presence of fellow Somalis. Having lived in Milton Keynes for ten

years, significantly longer than any of the other Somali young people I spoke to, it was perhaps noteworthy that Anwar often spoke positively of his life in Milton Keynes and even his residential area of Netherfield, one of the more socio-economically deprived estates within the city.

The responses from both Somali and Ghanaian young people serve to highlight how their different migratory histories have created contingent identities within these groups which are not always acknowledged by policy-makers and practitioners and present additional challenges for those presenting themselves as 'leaders' of the 'community'. Sometimes these complex patterns can have rather surprising consequences. In one school, for example, it looked as if there was strong evidence of ethnically based segregation, as teachers expressed concern about the way in which a group of Ghanaian children apparently refused to mix with others in the playground, in contrast to the other children from a range of ethnic groups. It soon became apparent that the main reason for this was the fact that English was not the first language of these children – instead they were speaking German to each other. Mary, the head teacher of a Catholic Primary school in Milton Keynes noted:

Within the past four years there has been a rapid increase in the numbers of children to our school and they have largely come via the European route, so they have come via Germany and the Netherlands, so we have 23 languages spoken in our school. A large percentage of our children are Ghanaian. Those Ghanaian children speak maybe German or Dutch and maybe Twi which is their own language and we have a high percentage of children who came to the school with no English at all.

The result of this increasingly common and more complex migration dynamic is a more diverse set of experiences and trajectories, as well as growing division and dissimilarity within what were often seen as relatively fixed and homogenous communities. It is in this context that community identity is produced locally. This dynamic was also observed among faith-based communities, despite the bonding role which religious centres played.

### **Faith and religious centres within communities: a bonding role**

Observations from the field and insights from participants indicated that regular attendance at places of worship was common for both Somalis and Ghanaians and highlighted the strong place that formal religion has in the lives of members of both communities. Somalis in Milton Keynes generally hold Friday prayers with a wider East African Muslim population in various community centres across the city (since they are currently in the process of raising money to build themselves a mosque), while Ghanaians attend a diverse selection of churches including Pentecostal, Methodist and Seventh Day Adventist with some predominantly Ghanaian in membership, while others contain ethnically mixed congregations. Of particular interest for this research is the role played by religious centres in providing support to those newly arrived and establishing a site of social bonding and attachment routed in shared religious beliefs.

The challenges of the constant population flux experienced within Milton Keynes were also observed among religious leaders, which shaped the formation and dynamic of these groups along with the ability of their leaders to convincingly represent a distinct population. Cyril, the pastor of a local (predominantly Ghanaian)

church describes the problems he faced when establishing his church, which still exist today:

I mean Milton Keynes is a very peculiar place, because in London when you start a ministry you tend to have a solid base... you don't have a churn. In Milton Keynes you find out that... they're here working on contracts and then they're moving on to Northampton or to Bedford, it was more, the congregation was more people who had come seeking work in Milton Keynes, and because of that I mean ... You know they had that sort of transient or they're kind of mobile in that sense so... we've had that and sometimes you just wonder what's going on here, you know?

This churn or flux in population noted by Cyril has a profound effect on the way in which (in this case religious) communities and community groups are established and operated within the city. Cyril contrasts his experience of setting up a church in Milton Keynes with doing so in London where he feels communities are more fixed and stable and therefore easier to reach, understand and represent.

In discussions with religious leaders and young people it was common to hear of people trying out a wide range of churches before finding the one they liked. This decision was based on factors such as the language in which the service is conducted (services in Ghanaian dominated churches in Milton Keynes take place in English, Ghanaian languages such as Twi and Fante as well as other European languages such as Dutch); the style of worship and the facilities for children and young people, among others. There is great diversity even within the religious practices of the Ghanaian population of Milton Keynes. According to Cyril: "people

like the different styles, the different types of ministries, the different emphasis, the different environments, they're just going to go where they feel comfortable". These churches are not rooted in neighbourhood based community but draw their congregations from across the city. This shift away from traditional parish churches (which serve – and arguably maintain a sense of – the local community) suggests a move beyond the micro-geographies of community emphasised in policy approaches discussed in Chapter Three and Chapter Five. It is also evidence of how these communities of 'belonging' extend their influence across the neighbourhoods of the city. Echoing the interest of Research Question Three upon the way 'community-ness' is created by particular loci, the *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Strategy* aimed to '... develop ownership by local people for their respective neighbourhoods and help different groups to get along well together' (MKC 2008a, p. 32). Yet it seems that (in the case of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes) religious centres act as a resource principally for exchange and community well-being between other church members, rather than around particular loci or to further multicultural exchange. Many Ghanaians are able to choose to attend a local chapel or branch of the church they attended before moving from London (e.g. Kingsway International Christian Centre) and in some cases even a local branch of the church they attended before moving from Ghana (e.g. Presbyterian Church of Ghana). Cyril explains this process of new migrants attending branches of their existing church in Milton Keynes here:

Now you've got a lot of Ghanaians who have come from Ghana and have grown up in ministries in Ghana and you find that a lot of ministries in Ghana have branches in the UK, so they have some sort of an allegiance to these

branches or to the ministers who are linked with various churches in the UK, so you get a lot of that... you know it's something that the churches think about: 'oh if we build a branch in London we'd better have a branch in Milton Keynes because that's where most of the Ghanaians are', so that's what's happened.

Also, acknowledging the European dimension to the migration of African migrants, another Ghanaian pastor, Dylan (who describes his church as at least 30 per cent Ghanaian but with approximately an additional 35 per cent from other 'Black African' backgrounds), comments that:

...with an influx of people coming from mainly continental Europe you find that when they came in and settled in they went back brought their families and friends, and so somehow the congregation that was in Germany, or the Netherlands, or France you find out they had a nucleus, so instead of maybe integrating into the existing churches they started their own.

In attending local branches of churches they have attended previously or establishing their own churches upon arrival, migrants are demonstrating the transnational dynamic of their communities and their attachment to notions of community which are not built around (Milton Keynes as) place (in the way that national and local community cohesion agendas have been shown to encourage), thus signifying the impact that religious centres can have on the processes of inclusion and integration upon arrival within the new city. Glick Schiller et al (2006, p. 620, 626) also discuss the role of Christian churches in the incorporation of transnational migrants in place, finding that 'born-again Christianity resonates with the yearning for a sense of being



at home in the world that is shared by migrants displaced from their previous life ...' and noting that pathways of 'local and transnational incorporation' were being pursued by migrants through born-again Christianity'. The significance of the role played by these churches in the inclusion and integration of migrants supports the argument put forward by Modood (2007a, p. 150) around the importance of religious identities as core social relations, noting that 'An inclusive national identity is respectful of and builds upon the identities that people value and does not trample upon them'.

Dylan also reflected on his own personal experience of arriving in Milton Keynes directly from Ghana in 1985. He described how at that time there were only two 'Black led' churches in the city and, without any meaningful existing social network or contacts, he and his family decided to join a nearby church based primarily around locality, the congregation of which represented the overwhelmingly white British make-up of the neighbourhood at that time. It is clear that his description of the more recent arrival of African migrants from Europe contrasts markedly with his own experience. Those arriving more recently are presented (and indeed arrive) with access to far greater levels of economic and social capital in the form of both financial and pastoral support from those of similar backgrounds. They also face, potentially, less necessity for interaction with those outside of these increasingly specific identities and experiences (for example, Dutch speaking and born Ghanaian young people).

As new migrants arrive and establish their own religious centres, community groups and organisations the existing centres and groups become less representative

of the community as a whole. Section 5.5 on the approach to managing multiculturalism showed the difficulties faced by the local authority as it struggles to respond to the changes taking place within its population, in part because of the way in which it engages with already existing groups even as new ones are emerging. Such approaches to community engagement and consultation fail to acknowledge the state of flux which characterises the population of Milton Keynes and risk essentialising groups where significant internal diversity exists. The proliferation of new community groups and associations from both new and existing migrant communities makes the task of meaningful community engagement all the more challenging and a process of 'co-construction' of representative groups by community leaders and local policy-makers was observed which is discussed in Section 6.3.

For both Somalis and Ghanaians the religious centres were often the first key sites for interaction between those arriving directly from Africa, those from London, those from Europe and the second generation born in the United Kingdom. Indeed for many they remain the focal point of their social lives. For those newly arrived, these centres actively provide support for settling in, and, in the cases of wholly Ghanaian congregations, can be seen as sites of what Robert Putnam has called 'bonding' social capital – an excess of which is sometimes held to get in the way of the 'bridging' social capital said to deliver community cohesion (Putnam 2000). The informal activities organised around these centres are just as important as the formal ones. Anwar, the seventeen year old Somali boy we heard from earlier, highlights the way in which a football tournament organised by the Milton Keynes Muslim

Association offered opportunities to move beyond his immediate community because:

... they were not just Somalis they were all just Muslims. I think it's a lot of mix because Muslims it's not just one nationality it's like all over the world, it's a global thing, so you get to meet a lot of different people...

In this context Milton Keynes operates as a site through which these forms of relationship are able to develop, and are themselves changed and redefined through the process. So, for example, here, the meeting of Muslims from across the world is enacted through the limited and specific space of a football tournament, rather than any global rhetoric or global movement. Milton Keynes becomes a space of encounter between these groups, as well as a New Town in the South East of England as a result of a shared faith (Islam) and a common interest (football). While also involving a degree of interaction between other non-Muslim teams entered into the tournament. A significant function of such events as described by Anwar above is the cross-cultural interaction which takes place outside of individual identities and community attachments, albeit in this instance primarily within a broader banner of the Islamic faith. Anwar's voice speaks not only to a transnational community but to young people's activities. Young people's stories and perspectives were continually present and evidence suggested that these perspectives were yet another particularity that warrants recognition from local policy-makers and also those seeking to position themselves as community 'leaders'.

## **New voices? Acknowledging generational differences within communities**

The age profiles of migrant populations present yet another area where significant difference of experience, opinion and practice is likely to exist within the labels of the Ghanaian and Somali communities. The proportion of young people in Milton Keynes is above the national average and this is also the case for the Ghanaian and Somali populations within the city. As a result it was common during focus groups for young people to express different views to those of their community elders on certain issues; most notably the extent to which they believed there was meaningful contact, mixing and cross-cultural exchange between those from different backgrounds. One local Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Assistant of Ghanaian origin, Lydia, noted the difficulties she had observed locally in Milton Keynes and also specifically within her church congregation (comprising many different nationalities and cultures) of encouraging the adults to step out of their comfort zones stating that:

There are certain groups which still keep to themselves, I think the Somali people for instance, do keep themselves to themselves, having said that even my Ghanaian community, when we go for parties, my friend goes to a church down the road, and in their church sometimes they have like a social evening where each country brings food that's displayed from their country, kind of to promote diversity, and I sit there with my Ghanaian people and I say to them: why don't you go and try this food from South Africa? And they say: oh, no, no, no, we don't like that food, and I say you know what that is the problem! You've got to try. You know, it's a very difficult thing with culture isn't it?

Local Ghanaian pastor Cyril's view again suggests a form of comfortable separation among adults in Milton Keynes:

I think the multi-cultural whole concept is that yeah we're living in harmony next to each other but actually we're not mixing too much, or we have an understanding, we're not against each other, but everyone partakes of what they know.

Young people seemed somewhat more positive in this regard than earlier generations whose experiences of multicultural exchange and interaction were somewhat measured, as evidenced above. In some cases during focus groups with young people their views were even framed in contrast to those held by the older generation. For example, Prince, a sixteen year old boy of Ghanaian origin, described how attitudes to dating non-Ghanaians differed amongst the older generation: "I think that is the reason why future generations won't be more mixed because it's like some people from Ghana would come here, say a boy my age has come here with his family just now and his family would be saying to him, 'oh you can only marry a black Ghanaian girl!'"'. However he moderated this concern reflecting on his own parents' when going on to say that: "...but like, say I wanted to marry a white girl, I don't think my dad would really be that fast to stop me", suggesting that attitudes may not always be uniform across the generation, possibly as a result of a process of gradual integration over time as Prince refers to those who have 'come here with his family just now'.

Given the youthful age profiles of the Ghanaian and Somali populations, it is necessary to question the extent to which a community leader (more often than not

a respected elder of that community) can adequately represent the views and experiences of young people. The evidence indicates that the identities of Ghanaian and Somali young people are shaped by their ethnic origin, but also by other factors including their own individual experiences as young people living in Milton Keynes and also their experiences growing up in the UK, other parts of Europe and (or) Ghana/Somalia, in addition to the other factors mentioned.

The various dynamics and differences described in this section serve to highlight the complexities contained within the definitions of the Ghanaian and Somali communities. Having developed a more detailed account of the two community groups under study in this research the next section picks up from Chapter Five and look more closely at what the fluidity and heterogeneity of the Somali and Ghanaian populations of Milton Keynes means for issues of community formation and engagement more broadly. It is important that these are acknowledged given the process of co-construction of community groups between community leaders and local policy-makers.

### **6.3 'Making-up' communities: the co-construction of groups by community leaders and local policy-makers**

The previous section showed that both the Somali and Ghanaian populations of Milton Keynes are heterogeneous. The paradox is that this contingency and complexity is accompanied by significant attempts by both policy-makers and community representatives to generate fixity of one sort or another. A complex relationship between community leaders and policy makers is apparent around the

process of community governance. Community leaders such as Ibrahim and Hakim (Somali) and Albert (Ghanaian) proudly acted on behalf of their respective groups and associations as representatives of other members of their community to the local authority and other voluntary and third sector organisations. Simultaneously officers from the local authority and voluntary and third sector organisations – sought out such representatives. In fact, on several occasions senior Council officers (from the Community Development and Community Safety teams respectively) asked me to signpost them to community leaders (particularly of Somali origin) that they could speak to on behalf of their respective wider communities. It seemed that most officers were aware of their lack of ‘contacts’ in the Somali community and hoped to find other leaders with which to engage; the corollary being the assumption that they had sufficient contacts within the Ghanaian community. It is possible that this was due to the fact that they were in contact with the Chair of the main association, unaware (as was I in the early stages) that there were in fact other groups and associations establishing themselves and operating on a relatively low key basis. David – a senior Council officer working in Community Safety – directly asked me for help in accessing the Somali community, while indicating that similar problems did not exist for the Ghanaian community:

... It’s a question of getting the contacts really, anything you can do to help I would be grateful. ...an awful lot of the Ghanaian community have got links with the Council; there are a lot of Ghanaians that work in the Council, Police etc ... They are a much better established community. I didn’t mean that as a qualitative term – a longer established community.

Making up communities is, in other words, a two way process in which members of communities look for ways of defining themselves so that they have an identity capable of generating some sort of social capital, while policy-makers and practitioners look for ways of defining communities so that they can more easily be managed, as noted in Chapter Three and Chapter Five.

Whatever the complexities of community building, the structures of community representation in Milton Keynes are familiar enough. Longstanding community associations exist for both the Ghanaian (Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes) and Somali (Milton Keynes Somali Community Association) populations professing to represent, and offer services to, members of their ethnic group within the city. These services include but are not limited to, organising youth groups, coach trips for young people, locations for religious worship, immigration advice, social events, visits to care homes and bereavement support. They fit the description of Putnam's (2000) 'bonding social capital' as 'community-produced resources', discussed by Mooney and Neal (2009, p. 26) and presented in Chapter Two. The process of 'representation' is one of the ways in which communities are made up in practice. Jessica, a twenty year old young person of Ghanaian origin who was born and raised in London before moving to Milton Keynes when she was thirteen, gives an example of one way in which this practice takes place:

Every single Ghanaian person in MK is in it (Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes) or knows someone that's in it and we have like meetings and parties it's just a way for all the Ghanaian people to get together and speak about what they wanna do and what they wanna see done, I know they've got a



charity event coming up and every year they have the Christmas party and the New Year party. They raise money for events, that kind of thing. Whenever like a new Ghanaian person moves here, I don't know how my dad does it, but he somehow finds out about it and tracks them down and gets them to join the group because he knows how it was when we first moved here and he wants to make sure that people do feel welcome and they don't feel isolated.

The types of activities and services offered by the Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes and the important role it has played in helping newly arrived Ghanaians to settle and establish themselves effectively described by Jessica demonstrates the sizable role of bonding social capital among Ghanaian migrants in the city. Also, Henry and Mohan (2003, p. 6) note the strong bond related to funerals and the importance among Ghanaians of being buried in the family's hometown in Ghana, thereby accommodating the local integration with transnational connections. These circumstances create the dynamic whereby communities of belonging (such as the Ghanaian community) can potentially play a more significant role in the social lives of new arrivals than traditional community structures focused around locality and neighbourhood.

However, more recently in response to the on-going migration described above, a proliferation of new more 'identity-specific' associations within these communities have come to light. Examples of these new bodies include the 'Ewe Association Milton Keynes (for Ghanaians from the 'Ewe' ethnic group of Ghana); the 'Over 10 years group' (for Ghanaians who have lived in Milton Keynes for over ten years); the 'Tepa Association' (a group made up primarily of those from the Akan

ethnic group from the Ghanaian city of Kumasi); the Unity Group (for Ghanaians who have migrated to Milton Keynes from Europe); the 'Horn of Africa Welfare Association' (a community group for Somalis and those from other parts of East Africa); the 'Somali Community Council' (established to bring all of the new Somali community groups together to promote unity and to speak with 'one voice') and 'AdvantageMK' (a social enterprise designed to support primarily the Somali community). These bodies serve to highlight the newfound complexities of migrant communities and processes of engagement within Milton Keynes.

The Somali community associations in particular are complicated and fragmented. Originally there was only one community organisation but this splintered – largely dividing along 'clan' lines, with the Somali Community Council established with the goal of bringing all of the groups together, with varying degrees of success. Access to funding has been a significant factor in the establishment of new groups, since once it is established each group can bid for funding independently. As a result competition for funds has also helped generate animosity between them. The combination of 'clan' divisions between Somalis in Milton Keynes and the exacerbation of these divisions via community funding practices have resulted in significantly fewer and weaker social bonds and social capital among Somalis as a whole. Meaningful bonding and levels of community belonging were observed, for example, in the activities of the respective community associations. Divisions did seem to dissipate at times of tragedy – such as the death of a young Somali boy during the course of my observations which prompted a collective response and period of mourning from Somalis locally and from further afield.

However these bonds were observed to exist to a lesser extent than their Ghanaian counterparts.

During interviews it was noted that as more new Somali community associations became established discontent grew around what they perceived as a lack of support from the local authority. Ibrahim, the leader of the Horn of Africa Welfare Association (a new group representing the Somali community as well as those from other countries in East Africa borne out of the splintering of the Milton Keynes Somali Community Association) describes his feeling that the local authority is failing to support the Somali community:

As a group we don't feel that MKC (Milton Keynes Council) were offering a wider support for this particular community, because in order for us to work with or to get help like most of the local authority prefers ... (we need) proper support for the local organisation, but which our organisation are not getting any support at all from Milton Keynes Council.

Similar views were put forward by Albert, the Chair of the Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes when facing difficulty gaining funding from Milton Keynes Council for the association's annual Christmas party (something that had traditionally always been subsidised by the Council). He felt quite strongly that the Council should be supporting this function in order to show their commitment to the city's diverse communities. He was proud of the fact that he eventually managed to obtain this funding from the Milton Keynes Community Foundation instead. One community leader who had quite a different take on the issue of funding to community groups was Hakim, the head of the Milton Keynes Somali Community Association and also

the founder of AdvantageMK, a local centre run as a Community Interest Company (CIC) in Conniburrow (an area of Milton Keynes with an above average Somali population):

All the communities and charities, they depend on what they get from the public money. All day they are running after funding, funding, funding, funding, funding and funding is a big issue .... They (other groups) get a huge amount of money but if I ask 'do that money goes according to what the government gave the money for?' then they will say 'no'. How much percentage that public money goes to what they plan for? It depends on the organisations ability and honesty, but I cannot say its 100 per cent. The other issue that communities have, especially the new communities is balancing in between, because we are not depending on any government money, it's your money!

AdvantageMK focused on providing services such as language and additional educational support classes to local (mainly Somali) young people and affordable internet access to all in the area. Hakim's comments reveal how he is attempting to find a way around the problems experienced by most community groups of having to pay rents for public buildings to hold meetings and be forced to continuously search for funding, by encouraging members of the community to buy shares in the CIC and support themselves.

Hakim describes how existing practices of funding groups to support communities has already caused (or at least reinforced) tensions within the Somali community in Milton Keynes, with an increasingly large array of groups and

associations representing different populations, and different facets of what might be perceived as the same populations. These growing tensions highlight critiques of social capital theory presented in Chapter Three which argued that in many cases high levels of community activism and social capital actually led to tension and conflict and therefore do not always strengthen relationships within communities. It is also likely that these tensions will highlight for funding bodies the fact that these representative groups do not always represent the entire community, as the groups often claim. Hakim's approach represents one alternative motivated by the practical constraints confronting communities. However he noted the many difficulties associated with convincing others of moving away from a reliance on public funding, including scepticism and mistrust of new methods among his own community.

In terms of community representation the Ghanaian community appears more organised, with the Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes continuing to present itself as a co-ordinating body and being recognised by official bodies in this role. However, this masks the extent to which divisions are emerging between established and financially secure Ghanaian residents and the more recently arrived and sometimes less secure. These divisions help to explain the creation of the Ewe Association Milton Keynes, the splintering of various church congregations, and the formation of more informal groups. It is likely that as numbers of Ghanaians within Milton Keynes have grown, so too have the numbers of the various ethnic groups which exist within this population, making the establishment of more 'identity-specific' groups such as the Ewe Association and the numerous African churches possible.

The research highlighted some of the problems associated with 'formal' attempts to define the Ghanaian and Somali communities, whether by those acting as representatives or those seeking representatives with whom to work. In many cases the 'gatekeepers' who provided research access to organisations and focus group participants went to great efforts to support the research (in one case driving around Milton Keynes picking up new participants to ensure a focus group could go ahead after several participants dropped out at short notice). The significance of this was discussed in Chapter Four. Representatives or leaders from religious centres and migrant associations clearly took these roles very seriously despite most being volunteers. In several cases the associations themselves were struggling to keep up with the pace of population change within the city. In other cases, particularly with Ghanaian churches and Somali community associations, the 'gatekeepers' were keen to represent their organisations as dynamic, vibrant and eager to work with Milton Keynes Council.

While there are clearly flaws associated with the approaches of community governance it is also necessary to note the important role that many of the leaders and representatives play in getting their communities recognised and their voices and needs heard where they would not otherwise have been. Actively participating in the research and fulfilling the role of 'gatekeeper' offered these individuals the opportunity to champion their cause and attempt to shape the portrayal of their group or association. In some instances it was apparent that their involvement served to reinforce their position as community representatives, as they were observed explaining their involvement with the project to their group members at

events with an element of prestige. Because the project was partially supported by the Council (as well as being conducted through a university) the assumption appeared to be that co-operating with the research might help confirm the position of the organisation within the local policy arena – whether as a source of finance or influence. Nor were these expectations entirely misplaced, as the earlier comment from David of the Community Safety Team on his desire to meet and engage with ‘hard to reach’ community leaders demonstrated. The continued assumption was that it should be possible to identify community leaders of one sort or another and so to work with them, as Ahmad’s comments in Chapter Five on the challenges of community engagement in Milton Keynes also demonstrated.

The evidence presented within this section highlights significant obstacles to engaging with communities in places with new migrant populations, of which new cities such as Milton Keynes are one example. The multifaceted nature of, in this case, the Ghanaian and Somali populations and the proliferation of representative groups and associations along increasingly ‘identity-specific’ lines suggest that the traditional approach taken by local authority officers of engaging with a small group of community leaders on behalf of each supposedly fixed and unchanging community is no longer adequate. As discussed in detail in Chapter Two, it is important to acknowledge the significance of the role of place in research into inter-ethnic relations, particularly within the context of Milton Keynes. As such the next section will look at the impact of the urban landscape of Milton Keynes upon structures of community formation and levels of cross-cultural interaction.

## **6.4 New city urban landscapes and social cohesion**

Contemporary popular debates around multiculturalism – or multiculturalism - have tended to take a sceptical stance, to the extent that it is understood as a ‘failure’ (see, e.g., Finney and Simpson 2009, pp. 77-78). This is also reflected in the policy discussion around community cohesion. As demonstrated in Chapter Three, community cohesion emerged as a popular term within British public policy discourse after a series of reports in 2001. These reports identified, among other things, a lack of clear political, community and religious leadership and a climate of ignorance, division and segregation between different racial, ethnic and religious groups living in each area (in this case generally defined through local government areas, rather than neighbourhoods).

The understanding that underpins these reports, with their emphasis on relatively homogeneous ethnic groups facing each other across a cultural divide has been persuasively questioned and even challenged. Deborah Phillips argues that the emphasis on ‘parallel lives’ is misplaced. She draws on a range of evidence to illustrate the extent to which ‘racialised spaces’ may rather be ‘sustained by fears of rejection, racism, and harassment’ (Phillips 2006, p. 38). The question remains whether there may be less – or differently – racialised spaces within which other forms of social interaction are possible.

As discussed in Section 6.2, Milton Keynes is expanding with the development of new homes and residential areas. Also, as a result of this development, there is an emergence of new communities based around both locality



and belonging. This research argues that investigating inter-ethnic relations within new city spaces can play an important role in challenging approaches which anticipate a climate of social isolation and ethnic segregation. While divisions and tensions have been noted there were also occasions where individuals negotiated their ways around these barriers. This section discusses evidence of the challenges of (and practical responses to) social and ethnic isolation and division presented by the urban landscape of Milton Keynes.

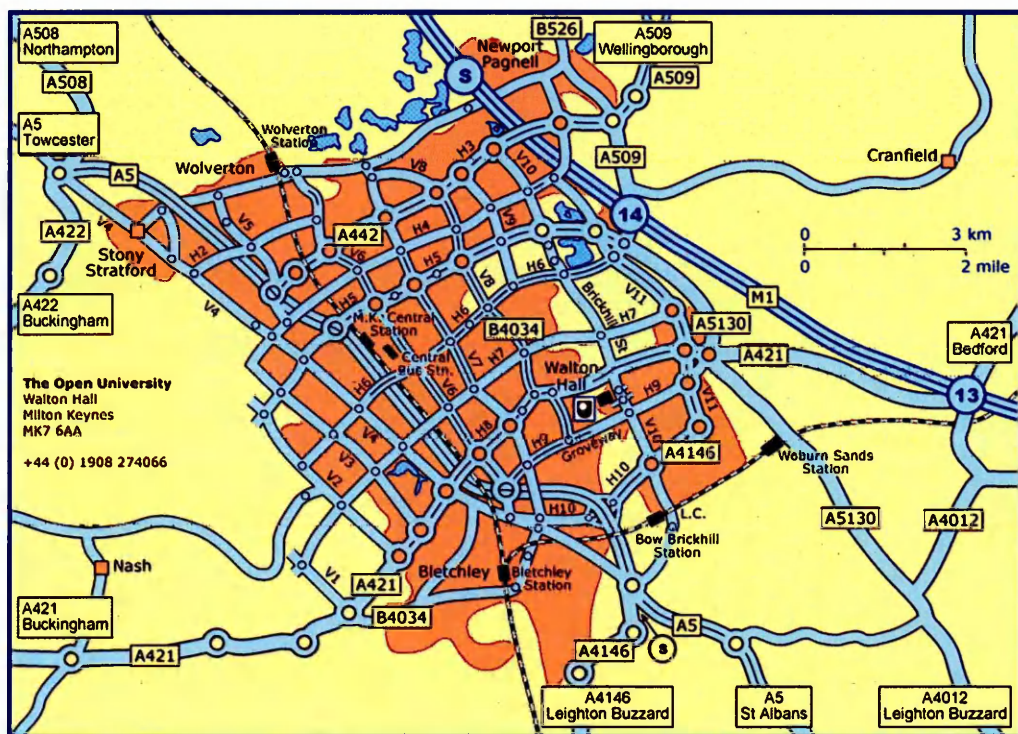


Figure 9: Map of Milton Keynes showing grid-road system ([www.open.ac.uk](http://www.open.ac.uk))

Milton Keynes is based on a grid-system of dual-carriageway roads (as demonstrated by Figure 9 above). As a result of this grid-system its residential areas are divided into estates bordered on all sides by these roads. Much is made locally of the divisive nature of these roads (and the urban layout of the city more generally), the poor standard of public transport within the city, the safety concerns around the redway

cycle network and underpasses which exist for pedestrians, and the impact of the local facilities within each estate. Many of these concerns were repeated by policy makers and practitioners, and, to a lesser extent, young people, in this research. For example, Ahmad was one senior policy-maker who noted the challenges of the urban landscape of Milton Keynes, in his capacity as the Corporate Equalities and Cohesion Manager for Milton Keynes Council:

It's like a border isn't it, it's like a natural border. The danger is that you have a poor area and a rich area on the other side and you just let the poorer areas decline, this is what they say about the 'two-speed city'. This is something you would probably have to mention, that the cruddier areas, the ones that need a bit of investment, they're not getting it, and it's all the new spanking areas that are getting it, right across the road.

Ahmad is highlighting one of the criticisms of urban development within Milton Keynes which is that the focus is disproportionately placed on growth, while neglecting the need for physical and social regeneration in older areas, contributing to the criticism of Milton Keynes as a 'two-speed city'. Another senior member of the Regeneration Team at Milton Keynes Council, Vicky, shared Ahmad's view that residents were 'entrenched' within their individual estates. However, while Vicky was encouraged as part of her role to reverse this process she actually saw it as quite natural given the circumstances:

People are very entrenched on their grid squares. I know we as an authority and other public sector organisations in the third sector want to break those barriers down, but actually they're almost natural, geographic boundaries...

those sorts of clusters are normal how are we supposed to break those barriers down, especially when you have all the facilities on one estate, so you have the local shop, you have the school, you have a community meeting place, actually it clusters in rather than spreads it out.

Despite this view that the road system generates obstacles to the interaction of its residents, the grid-system can also enable increased interaction among those *within* each estate, as Vicky has highlighted above. Indeed Ahmad, while critical of the divisive nature of grid-roads, was also aware of their benefits in developing stronger attachments to identities based around local communities:

The good thing about the grid roads is you can develop a sense of identity about that place, it's a lot easier. It's not going to be street based it's gonna be the grid or something. So the new areas, Broughton, Kingsmead, they have a kind of identity don't they?

For members of the Ghanaian community, mainly living in owner occupied housing, and widely distributed across the city, a continuing sense of community is maintained through church and other community and family networks, as outlined in Section 6.3. For members of the Somali community, mainly living in privately rented accommodation (often HMOs - Houses in Multiple Occupation) or in social housing, the separation is more apparent. Since Milton Keynes is divided into grid-squares without access to private transport there is little connection between them because public transport is orientated towards particular shopping areas that bypass the estates and neighbourhoods. The issue of public transport in Milton Keynes is a longstanding one and is addressed next.

## **The local public transport network: contributing to social division?**

Much maligned in some circles for having been 'designed for the car', the provision of public transport within Milton Keynes is subject to significant criticism locally by residents (including the MK Bus Users' Steering Group) and has even been singled out as 'the worst place for public transport' in the South East by the Campaign for Better Transport (see e.g., MK News 2011). Among my participants Gita, a leading figure from the local Equality body was another respondent who felt that the urban landscape of Milton Keynes contributed to social isolation which required urgent attention. She felt one of the key contributors to this was the public transport network within the city:

If they don't invest in the transport communities will become more and more isolated ... creating ghettos, it's not difficult in Milton Keynes ... It is one place where it can be easily done, because things are so far away, transport, houses, shops, so people just tend to live in their own little vicinity, and it's even happening in the Lakes Estate ... people on the Lakes Estate don't want to go into Bletchley, although Bletchley is only 20 minutes' walk from the Lakes.

Matthew, a senior Youth Worker for Milton Keynes Council shared, in part, Gita's concerns over the urban landscape, the poor public transport network and the impact of these upon his team's ability to deliver services to young people in certain grid-squares:

The geography of Milton Keynes is an interesting place, because it's a fairly low density population, it means that some of the distances and the ... distinct

lack of public transport at the times when people really want it, there are areas of Milton Keynes that it's very difficult to cover, I mean if I looked at say the newer estates on the east of Milton Keynes, um, we find it really difficult to deliver services there... [but] there's quite a high youth population in that area...

On several occasions during the focus groups young people discussed their struggles in moving easily around the city when relying on public transport. Akosua (a sixteen year old Ghanaian female born and raised in Milton Keynes), Earl (a sixteen year old Ghanaian male born in London, moved to Ghana for six years, then moved back to London about two years ago before recently moving to Milton Keynes), Dora (a seventeen year old Ghanaian young person born in London then moved to Milton Keynes when she was five) and Timothy (a eighteen year old Ghanaian male born in London then moved to Milton Keynes when he was six) all described scenarios of being unable to reach friends in other estates easily and affordably due to bus routes and pricing, of buses failing to arrive and of bus drivers failing to stop for them at bus stops. Almost all of the young people I spoke to were bus users to varying degrees. However, many spoke of how they had to rely on their parents to drive them to many activities, especially in the evenings and on the weekends as taking the bus just wouldn't be possible.

Having noted the grievances and concerns over the public transport network in Milton Keynes and its potential to exacerbate social divisions, it is also important to note that many other responses suggested a variety of ways in which it was

possible to move in and out of different estates and areas of the city to access different groups and services.

It was common during the focus groups to hear of young people accessing facilities and services and socialising with friends in neighbouring estates, often through shared interests such as dance or music clubs or football and other sporting interests. All the young people acknowledged the 'coming-together' which took place with those from outside their immediate residential areas and communities of belonging in their secondary schools as well as in the main shopping centre. Yusuf, a senior youth worker responsible for the South Eastern area of the city saw the shopping centre as one of very few sites of 'coming together': "if you look at it, it's only the city centre that you can guarantee to see every ethnic minority, or every you know, culture or group of you know people converge and come together as one". It was also common for the young people I interviewed to reflect positively on the grid-system and how the redway network makes it easy for them to walk or cycle to different parts of the city safely. One example was Abena, an eighteen year old female of Ghanaian origins who was born and raised in Milton Keynes, who commented:

It's quite nice because you know what you want, it's not too difficult to get around and about ... you know who is in your neighbourhood, you have some friends who live nearby and you go to school close-by so it's not too difficult, for me anyway.

As noted earlier the barriers of the urban landscape and public transport network were most visibly broken down by churches and religious groups who routinely

attended services outside of their local residential area exploiting the use of minibuses where private transport was not available. A typical Sunday (particularly in the late mornings and afternoons) sees a vast array of private minibuses marked with the names and graphics of their various churches criss-crossing Milton Keynes collecting and returning members of their congregations from services. In certain areas such as Netherfield it was not uncommon to find several different buses from different churches collecting and returning individuals to the same apartment buildings at the same time. This alternative transport network demonstrated quite strikingly the significance of these communities of belonging and sentiment over the perceived constraints of (and also attachments to) locality. Cyril, the local Ghanaian pastor, described how his church coped with the limited public transport infrastructure and fairly low density population in Milton Keynes:

... When we're running a church these days it's not just, there are whole logistical issues, there's a whole management job, it's not just preparing to preach or counsel or whatever... you need transport, someone who runs the transport system and a whole plan on how you're picking up people, and dropping them, so you have someone who's in charge of the whole logistics of bring people in and dropping them, not just on Sunday but on Tuesday for prayer or when you have home cell meetings, the transportation works.

It is clear from the comments from Cyril and the young people above that, while limited public transport can present challenges to individual freedom of movement, the challenges to moving easily between estates, while significant, can be overcome

via various means where they are in pursuit of shared interests and activities and supported by a certain level of economic and social capital.

### **Local community facilities: a bridging role?**

The level of attachment which respondents felt towards their grid-square estate seemed to be quite strongly linked to the presence of certain facilities. Some estates were spoken of positively in terms of community feeling and positive relationships, whereas others were discussed in terms of isolation and a lack of social interaction. Positive views of local estates related to the presence of community facilities such as shops, community centres, playgrounds, open spaces and football fields as factors which positively affected the micro-geographies of interaction between local people. Fatima, who described herself as quite an active early member of the Somali community when she first arrived and worked in a secondary school as an Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Assistant commented:

Within the neighbourhood that we live in there isn't much of a community sense you know, where I live ... we don't even have a shop, a shopping centre or anything like that so there's nothing that brings us together you know we don't see each other ... so we've become kind of like you know we just come into the house where we live in and that's it so there is no connection with the local people let alone the ones (other Somalis) who are isolated somewhere else.

Fatima highlights how important local facilities are in allowing for the type of spontaneous interaction between local people of any background discussed in



Chapter Two by Back (1996) and Amin (2002). Indications from participants suggested that the experiences of local communities among those living within the city can vary greatly depending on the level of community facilities which exist in that area. As Debbie, a sixteen year old girl of Ghanaian origin explains:

There are a lot of local areas that don't have shops, Tattenhoe doesn't have a shop, Oakhill, before Grange Farm, the area that I live in, didn't have a shop and the people from Oakhill had to walk all the way to Crownhill every day. Now that we've got shops its ok but other estates don't.

Fatima lives in one of many estates in Milton Keynes with no shops or other community facilities and says that as a result she does not feel any meaningful attachment to her local area. It seems that despite the methods employed by community organisations and religious centres to foster communities of belonging which mobilise people across the divisions of the urban landscape, it remains that some living in areas with fewer facilities feel a degree of isolation and very little sense of attachment to the local area and its people. This is significant given the drive within community cohesion policy behind shared senses of identity both on the national and local scales. Fatima described how her daughter spent a lot of her time socialising in a nearby estate where her school was based as its Somali population was far higher than where they lived:

Fishermead has got all these Qur'an classes going on, you know there's after school clubs you know, there's so much going on there is the karate classes, the dance classes you know so there is movement within there, yeah those are the things that you know, you meet people who live around the same area so

there is a continuity of you know, interaction. But when you live in small places where there's nothing going on, you have to go you know either enrol yourself, or register yourself to the gym somewhere across the other side where other lucky people who live, I see them, I see that they've got everything around them, so whoever they're interacting with from school it will be the one they meet in after school clubs or they meet in the karate, so they still have a continued relationship with a number of people rather than you know being isolated.

Community facilities were also a big concern for Matthew (Senior Youth Worker, Milton Keynes Council) in relation to the provision of youth services:

We really struggle to find somewhere suitable to deliver, and where we have our own buildings we are able to deliver a much higher quality service because we set the environment ... part of our problem is, if you look at some of the areas of higher need, we don't have the facilities there, because the youth centres in Milton Keynes were built when the money was there to build youth centres, so back in the 1960s.

Clearly some of the same concerns around the role played by local community facilities in fostering a 'bridging' social capital within local areas are shared by young people, policy-makers and community leaders. Interestingly estates which exhibit high levels of deprivation were spoken of positively by Fatima (who lived outside of them) as a result of the social networks and community facilities which they contained which were seen to create greater social interaction both in 'bonding'

Somali and Muslim communities but also in bridging the many other communities that lived there.

### **Young people in Milton Keynes: forms of interaction beyond the ethnic lens?**

In some respects, it is the shared understanding of the nature of Milton Keynes across any supposed ethnic divide which is most striking in speaking to Ghanaian and Somali young people. Rather than finding evidence for the existence of parallel lives, it appears that (Milton Keynes as) place is experienced and interpreted in much the same way by its residents regardless of community affiliations (see, e.g., Clapson 2004, for a discussion of attitudes to living in Milton Keynes). The perceptions of young people were most often not specific to their ethnic identities but rather general views of young people. In particular, positive comments were made about the central shopping centre and associated leisure facilities, as well as about open park space, allowing for sport-related activities of one sort or another.

The use of online social networking through programmes such as MSN and Skype and sites such as Facebook were mentioned by a large proportion of the Ghanaian young people who participated in the research. Online connectivity was highlighted by Ahmad as one area where he and his team were able to address issues of social isolation created by the urban landscape and other corresponding factors which he saw as barriers to increasing levels of social cohesion, stating:

We rent out computers as a Council, there aren't that many Council's that would do that. It's about cohesion, social inclusion, it's about getting people

onto the superhighway... it's a project to address the problems of MK's design and geographical infrastructure, giving people computers.

Most of the Ghanaian young people suggested that Facebook was another way they kept in touch with people without necessarily having to meet up with them in person. Abena (an eighteen year old Ghanaian young person born and raised in Milton Keynes) supported Ahmad's belief that internet connectivity was one way to tackle the difficulties associated with transport and freedom of movement around the city, commenting that: "...the ones that you don't really see it's good to meet them on Facebook and just catch up". Also, as part of a discussion of the use of Facebook by young people in one focus group with Ghanaian young people the interaction between Prince and the rest of the group serves to highlight the role of online social networking on the lives of the young people as they all respond in agreement:

**Prince:** Sometimes you get back from school and it's like what are you gonna do?

**All:** FACEBOOK

**Prince:** It's like the first thing that comes into your head, you wouldn't think of anything else to do on a weekday evening when you've got homework and stuff no one can really think of anything you are going to do... We get home at like 5pm and then by that time after being on a bus for like an hour and a bit (Prince attended a grammar school outside of

Milton Keynes) I'm tired so I just watch TV, eat, go and do my homework, by the time I'm finished it's like 8pm, then ...

**All:** FACEBOOK!

The use of Facebook and its significance in representing the senses of attachment felt by young people was mentioned in another focus group with Ghanaian young people and is evidenced by the following exchange:

**Jamie:** So you've been here since you were 13. Do you feel like living in MK is a big part or a significant part of your identity?

**Felix:** Well...um... nah, not really.

**Dominic:** because on your Facebook it still says location: Holland!

**Jamie:** Is that how you guys measure whether or not you are still attached to one place or the other, if you change your (Facebook) network from Holland to Milton Keynes, that's when you've finally settled?

**All:** YEAH! (laughs)

The negative comments are familiar enough, too. Milton Keynes was identified by Debbie as a 'big town, rather than a 'proper' city'. So, for example, although the central shopping centre, the clubs, cinemas and other leisure facilities were valued, there was a concern that there was really only one place to go. This problem was exacerbated by the nature of urban design coupled with the poor public transport

system. Not only was there likely to be little of interest within walking distance, the limited bus system meant that travel to anywhere else was complicated and difficult. Jessica summed up her frustrations with a middle sized settlement like Milton Keynes by complaining about the absence of a youth media scene:

... I was just saying because I studied journalism that I realised that there isn't much of a kind of youth media scene like you have in other big cities. Obviously we have the local paper and everything but we don't have um you know, a magazine for young people or a newspaper for young people, you know a media outlet where there is stuff that relates to them, cos if you read the Citizen (local newspaper) a lot of it is just boring stuff you know 'cat up a tree' that sort of thing, stuff that nobody pays attention to...

These responses to life in Milton Keynes, in other words, reflect no particular ethnically or community based sets of concerns. There may be a stronger sense of the lack of spaces for convivial cross-cultural interaction which helps reinforce feelings of social disconnection and isolation city-wide - identified as an issue by Ahmad when he commented: "well there are lots of parks and things but in the [shopping] centre there isn't stuff to do for free. You know we have a play area in every estate, all that stuff is good, but there isn't that major landmark type stuff that people can do for free..." However, this seems to be an age related phenomenon affecting young people more widely, rather than one specific to Somali or Ghanaian young people. This does not mean that differences are insignificant. On the contrary, as we have noted earlier, in some respects the experience of those young people was rather more uncertain, and reflected a more ambivalent relationship to place,

suggesting that it may be more helpful to focus on the conviviality of multicultural interaction and exchange rather than presupposing division between groups treated as distinct.

It was acknowledged by the young people who participated that in many cases the grid-system does create divisions between those living in each estate but actually generally they don't tend to problematise this as much as policy makers and practitioners. Also, while young people noted some concerns about 'postcode rivalries', they demonstrated an ability to flow between friendship networks of school, church, culture, language, social interest and local area in quite a sophisticated way to be able to spend time with their friends, rejecting, for now, Gita's forecast of ghettos being created in Milton Keynes. Instead their responses encourage a focus on the everyday interactions which do take place between those from different backgrounds.

## **6.5 Convivial interactions and ambivalent relations in new city spaces**

The previous section has indicated despite several perceived barriers, everyday interactions between those from different cultures and backgrounds within Milton Keynes are common. With the (relatively) newly diverse population in Milton Keynes an experience of living apart but also together has been observed whereby both 'mixing' and 'non-mixing' are commonplace and negotiated depending on circumstances. This phenomenon was found to be particularly common among young people who demonstrated a very sophisticated approach to notions of being part of communities of belonging (such as nationality, religion), interest (such as

football teams) and institution (such as school). At the same time institutions such as schools and religious centres played a role in both facilitating and restricting multicultural exchange between those from different backgrounds in the ways in which they accommodate and approach issues of difference. On the one hand, possibilities of convivial interaction are explicitly identified. According to Akua (a sixteen year old girl of Ghanaian origin born and raised in Milton Keynes) the city, with its changing population, is good for bringing people together across pre-given community lines: "... everybody has like a Jamaican friend, a Nigerian friend, a Somali friend. Everybody mixes with each other". But clearly this is not an unproblematic process of 'mixing'. So, for example, here it seems to remain between members of a range of minority (in this case 'black') groups. Debbie identifies some of the tensions, highlighting a process of separation while also pointing to the existence of a wider friendship group:

In our school we have a kind of mix but not really. Say there are like five black people that hang around together people feel really intimidated... I don't know why but they are really intimidated and I remember white girls saying to me like 'how come all of your friends are you know...black?'... I mean I hang out with like four white people and then all the rest of us are black and mixed-race and it's like really weird like when we walk down the corridors because people look at you like they are scared...

Jessica describes a longer process of negotiation during her arrival from London when the ethnic make-up of Milton Keynes was still in its infancy:



I remember when I first went to the city [centre], I felt like wow, at that time I felt like I was the only black person there. I felt like everyone was staring at me. They probably weren't, but that was what it felt like and I was just like 'I wanna go home and go back to London' because I wasn't used to it. I remember at school there was just one black clique and all the black people hung around together and it wasn't until like a few years later when people started to mix and more people started to move here from different areas and it felt more multicultural and people started to mix and it didn't feel like people were staring at me or like I as the only one. So I think it just took time to get used to it... when I came here and the school is predominantly white, my teacher at the time when I arrived just shoved me in with the black people, which I, at the time, was just like 'OK – I know it seems like I want to hang around with black people' and she just shoved me with them like 'that's your people, just get on with it', which kind of threw me and then by the time I had left school quite a large majority of my friends were white.

Jessica's comments highlight the newness of Milton Keynes' multicultural populations and also the routine interactions and process of negotiated cross-cultural mixing which was apparent within the city. There was a widespread acceptance within the focus group that there was still a tendency for the friendship networks of young people to cluster within 'black' or 'white' groupings, even if these clearly went across more narrowly defined community boundaries. But the wider divisions remained fuzzy and permeable, confirming the possibilities of convivial interaction. As Earl put it:

I just think it will be more mixed because we are all talking to each other already and everyone is getting along with each other in school and that. They do what they do and Ghanaians do what they do, but they still talk to each other.

From this perspective, it should be apparent, conviviality should not be seen as some unproblematic process of coming together or homogenisation - a space within which difference can be negotiated and argued over, rather than one in which it disappears or becomes settled.

The insights of commentators such as Back (1996), Amin (2002) and Clayton (2009) discussed in Chapter Two provide a valuable basis on which to build research which allows for the exploration of relationship building in particular spaces, rather than starting from expectations defined by attempts to identify pre-existing (and socially bounded) communities. Amin (2002) and Back (1996) share a perspective which suggests that working through fixed categories defined as 'communities' is likely to be a dead end, and that it is the new possibilities for interaction in urban spaces, rather than the arid fixities of community cohesion that matter. The potential significance of this way of thinking is highlighted by Gilroy (2004a, p. 108) who describes the choice for the future as one between 'a melancholic longing for a return to the relative cultural homogeneity of old' on the one hand, and an appreciation of the importance of what he calls the 'conviviality' of ordinary, everyday, lived forms of multiculturalism on the other. This routine multiculturalism is, according to Gilroy, one of the most effective tools for discrediting notions of closed and fixed identities at our disposal as it has evolved organically through a

routine everyday exposure to difference (Gilroy 2004a; 2004b, 2005). This chapter has emphasised a focus on the micro-geographies of prosaic interaction and their relationship with local governance regimes. Nevertheless the limitations of Putnam's social capital theory to deliver this kind of approach have been noted here.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

Despite some significant questioning of the way in which the processes of community representation and engagement have been interpreted and mobilised these processes have provided the iconic representation of multiculturalism in the policy imagination, generating concerns about ethnic division and encouraging a drive to community cohesion. This has made it difficult to reflect on some of the more prosaic ways in which multiculturalism is experienced in practice.

Here, by contrast, an attempt has been made to explore the experiences in what might be understood as an 'ordinary' place, one in which it might also be expected that social relations would be less explicitly racialised. Whatever its history as a New Town, Milton Keynes can no longer be described as monocultural. On the contrary, not only is its population continuing to grow (through migration as well as a high birth rate) but it has an increasingly diverse population. Neither can place be viewed as merely the setting for multicultural communities, as the urban landscape and the spaces of interaction within the city have been shown to play an important role in the various processes of community formation and settlement which take place within migrant populations. Milton Keynes will continue to be reshaped and

influenced as it continues to experience new patterns of change and growth, both within its physical layout but also among its residents.

The evidence presented in this chapter begins to point to some of the processes of negotiation that take place as communities are defined and redefined (and define and redefine themselves) in practice. It indicates some of the ways in which individuals – young people in particular – negotiate their way through familiar forms of everyday encounter. It highlights some of the opportunities that exist as they do so, as well as reflecting some of the obstacles that they face. The process may be uncertain and the outcomes problematic, but these young people are not living parallel lives – on the contrary they are actively negotiating difference, both within their own, as well as between other groups. There is evidence of practical conviviality, alongside evidence of the limitations, difficulties and tensions. The spaces of prosaic encounter stretch from local shops to football tournaments to schools and churches and even to online social networks and take specific local forms, on occasion bringing together the transnational in place.

What is also apparent is that the formal (local) politics of multicultural face substantial difficulties as they seek to engage with these sets of relationships. In part this is because they generally focus on the identification of representative forms of community organisation, to the extent that without representatives with whom to negotiate it is no longer possible to develop policy. However, the very identification of such representatives tends to ossify the changing relationships associated with the communities being represented. This research has found that these communities are both more differentiated than this suggests and less clearly bounded. Governance

structures make effective engagement difficult, since the need to be responsive to funders (and the initiatives of national government) means that the policy world operates quite separately from the daily practices of multicultural exchange and conflict.

The challenge is to find ways of opening up spaces of encounter in ways that generate positive opportunities, rather than seeking to manage 'communities' as more or less fixed. The paradox, which is particularly apparent in the case of a place like Milton Keynes, is that the communities themselves are in a state of flux, being made and making themselves, in part, in response to the expectations of the state. In other words, in the context of increased fluidity and uncertainty, governance drivers continue to search for fixity. It is this search that needs to be questioned.

# 7. Conclusions

---

## 7.1 Introduction

This thesis aimed to investigate new migrant populations and the ways in which newly multicultural communities have emerged and become a part of Milton Keynes as a city and also an established part of the workings of local policy. Chapter One outlined how geographies of multiculturalism within the contemporary UK have changed significantly in recent years and how it is now far more common to find substantial ethnic, religious and cultural diversity in areas other than the large urban centres and post-industrial northern towns. Chapter Two argued that geography and the importance of place had a long history in qualitative research into race, ethnicity and community in the UK. This study of Milton Keynes has incorporated both of these wider developments and academic traditions but has presented a different case as the challenge has been to develop forms of inclusive growth to meet the needs of communities in the process of being made and making themselves. It represents a recognition of the fact that as the experience of increasingly diverse communities becomes more common across the country it is increasingly important to understand the dynamics of community formation and settlement which accompany these changing demographics and, having done so, to look at local policy approaches and develop appropriate strategies to cope with any challenges or opportunities associated with these changes.

This study has drawn on the experiences of Ghanaians and Somalis, two recently settled Black African migrant populations in the city, and examined the

differences, difficulties, commonalities and successes in the two processes of inclusion, particularly focusing on the role of schools, provision for young people and religious centres. In this context, it sought to explore multicultural policy-making within Milton Keynes and how it may shed light on policy interventions in other places with long as well as short multicultural histories.

The research examined two key sites of local community construction – schools and provision for young people and religious centres. This focus reflected a number of factors: the age profiles of the two migrant groups; the concerns over both young people and religion in community cohesion agendas and the particular formal and informal roles that schools and religious centres play in sustaining ‘structures of community feeling’. The approaches and fieldwork of this research have been guided throughout by the five research questions outlined in Chapter One.

This concluding chapter reflects on the key themes and findings of the research in response to these research questions. It is divided into four main sections based on the most significant outcomes from the research which are; the role of place in understandings of community and race and ethnic relations (Section 7.2); multicultural policy-making and community engagement practices (Section 7.3); observations of community formation and everyday convivial interactions between groups ‘living together, apart’ (Section 7.4); and methodological insights from researching multiculturalism in new city spaces (Section 7.5). Each section looks at how these outcomes have helped address the original research questions and wider aims,

setting the project within wider academic and public policy debates, in order to establish the significance of this research and its original contribution to knowledge.

Reviewing approaches to multicultural policy making on both the national (Chapter Three) and local levels (Chapter Five) enabled the research to address Research Questions One, Four and Five. Research Questions Two and Three were tackled in Chapter Two whilst considering understandings of 'community' and the relationship between 'race' and place in social research and these understandings were then applied in Chapter Six when looking at migrant settlement processes within Milton Keynes. Research Question One was very much present in Chapter Six as it examined what community variously meant for participants in the context of Milton Keynes.

## **7.2 The role of place in community and race and ethnic relations**

The first key point for this research is the role played by place in issues of race, ethnic and community relations. From the outset this project identified an interest in the role played by physical and social spaces in the lives of local people and the extent to which these people interact with those from different backgrounds to their own. This interest was articulated in Research Question Three on the ways in which particular loci – such as schools and religious centres – can create 'community-ness' by bringing very different populations together or by being active as social institutions in local communities.



By reflecting back on early 'race' studies conducted in the late 1960s and 1970s such as Rex and Moore's (1967) study of Sparkbrook, Rex and Tomlinson's (1979) study of Handsworth in Birmingham and Pryce's (1979) study of St Paul's, Bristol the research was able to identify how geography – and more specifically place – had been used as a lens for understanding multicultural local community relations in the UK. Chapter Two suggested that there was a shift in emphasis in the 1980s towards more social resources and services, identity and policy-based concerns and research (e.g. CCCS 1982; Sivanandan 1982; Henderson and Kahn 1987; Gilroy 1987; Sarre et al 1989; Ball and Solomos 1990; Brah 1996). However, while geography never fully disappeared from research and is visible in the work of Ben-Tovim (1988), Solomos and Back (1995) and Back (1996), its role tended to be as case study setting rather than as part of an integral part of the actual social relations being explored.

This thesis has sought to suggest that place is more than just a setting for social research. Drawing on debates in geography (e.g. Massey 1991) the thesis has suggested that focusing on places allows context specific analysis of social interactions and connections which were discussed in Chapter Six and are revisited in Section 7.5. Chapter Two argued that a renewed emphasis on the role of geography and place – by investigating race, ethnic and community relations within Milton Keynes – would highlight the different complexities and dynamics of new multiculturally constituted communities within the contemporary UK.

Social researchers in the 1960s and '70s interested in issues of 'race' and community relations based their respective works in large urban areas as this is where migrants were initially settling. The argument which was made within Chapter

Two, and indeed the justification of this thesis more broadly, is that as concentrations of ethnic minority and migrant populations now extend beyond the large urban industrial areas to include areas with relatively short histories of ethnic minority and migrant settlement it is important to recognise and understand the experiences of these new multicultural city spaces in coping with the challenges and appreciating the opportunities that their newly multiculturally constituted populations present.

In reviewing the findings of Rex and Moore (1967), Rex and Tomlinson (1979), Pryce (1979) and other similar studies in Chapter Two it was notable that, while they all identified localities in which to base their research interests, all three were typified by discoveries of pervasive forms of marginalisation, social isolation, exclusion and division between local ethnic groups and populations in areas characterised by decline and in need of physical and social regeneration. In contrast, Milton Keynes is characterised by growth and not typified by the presence of 'parallel lives' as Cattle (2001) identified in the UK's northern towns, but rather experiences degrees of separation along with significant residential mixing and cross-cultural interaction. It was possible to begin to trace considerations of the possibilities (and impact) of cross-cultural contact and interaction between those from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds from as early as Rex and Moore (1967) – albeit while relying heavily upon relatively fixed notions of 'communities' – and to relate these to contemporary considerations of the same dynamic in Milton Keynes. Influenced by Back (1996) and Amin (2002) and focusing on both interactions and dialogue between individuals and groups from different

backgrounds within a local area the research used its empirical findings to highlight how the Milton Keynes context contradicted understandings of multicultural communities which were based upon the presumption of deprivation, social isolation and segregation such as those upon which the community cohesion agenda was based.

The extent to which the urban landscape contributed towards divisions between communities of both belonging and locality was also explored in Chapter Six. While Chapter Two outlined how some urban areas within the UK have been described as being characterised by a spatial separation or segregation between ethnic groups (Cantle 2001; Ouseley 2001; Phillips 2005), this would not accurately describe Milton Keynes. In fact, despite the geographical division of the city into residential 'grid-squares' and degrees of separation and non-mixing within certain contexts, young people of both Ghanaian and Somali origin within the city often reflected positively on the sense of community which existed within Milton Keynes' smaller residential areas and also demonstrated the various ways in which they would move out of their local areas to access certain facilities or services and, in the process, take part in routine interactions and processes of negotiated cross-cultural mixing. These findings suggested that the problems of 'entrenchment' and 'isolation' within local areas, identified by Council officers like Vicky or by Gita from the local Equality body in Chapter Six, were not problematised by young people in the same way.

Unsurprisingly, a link emerged in participant's responses between the presence of local community facilities (such as shops, parks, pharmacies and schools)

and the sense of attachment to a local area. This sense of attachment reinforces the significance of place and more specifically highlights the benefit of local physical and social spaces of interaction for successful multicultural communities. Local community facilities such as the local shops, community centres, parks and playgrounds were identified by participants as spaces where intercultural contact and mixing happened. The absence of these types of spaces and facilities led to a lack of social interaction and, for several of my participants, a lack of attachment to the local area. It is nevertheless important within the context of Milton Keynes not to overstate the extent to which a lack of community facilities leads to individuals leading 'parallel lives'. The proximity of Milton Keynes' local neighbourhoods (or grid-square estates) to each other and the various other modes of identity and belonging which existed among young people outside of their attachment to their local neighbourhood (such as religious belief, sporting and other social interests etc.) suggested that, even for those living in areas of low levels of attachment and pride without significant community facilities, young people were still likely to mix with those from other backgrounds at school or as a result of their social pastimes.

The importance of sites of local interaction such as shops, cafes, pubs, parks and playgrounds echoed the findings of early place-based studies which also commented on the impact of ethnic or locally based community associations and religious centres as spaces of social bonding within different ethnic groups (e.g. Rex and Moore 1967). This interest in where and how community gets constructed chimed with Research Question Three of this research project on how particular loci (such as schools and religious centres) work to create 'community-ness', focusing

particularly on how multicultural exchange and community well-being are facilitated or restricted. This research also found that migrant community organisations and associations and religious centres played a vital role in the settlement processes of ethnic minority and migrant groups within the city. It was apparent that religious centres and migrant community associations played a significant role in exercising forms of social capital and formal and informal capacity on the implementation of multicultural policy-making in Milton Keynes, specifically in shaping settlement, and formal and informal engagement practices. The part played by place and micro-geographies of interaction within the findings for this research around migrant settlement and community formation provides a link to another key finding of this research, the practice of 'living together, apart' (which is revisited in this chapter in Section 7.4) and also highlights the role played by migrant community associations and religious centres in providing and supporting 'bonding' social capital based on empirical findings from Chapter Six.

Chapter Two argued that there was an ever-present notion of 'community' in the range of different empirical and theoretical approaches to multicultural. From the studies of the local community groupings of Sparkbrook (Rex and Moore 1967), Handsworth (Rex and Tomlinson 1979) and St Paul's (Pryce 1979) to those more closely linked with issues, identity and policy and later to those interested in interactions between people from different ethnic groups (Gilroy 1987; 2004; Back 1996; Amin 2002) 'community' has not disappeared as a way of understanding identity and place and exclusion – even if it has been differently argued over. This research has also shown how community continues to dominate both formal and

informal social and policy relations in multicultural contexts. Place-based approaches offer the possibility of a more progressive and locally grounded take on community which escapes the limiting, fixed notions that community can be based on. Chapter Six spent time using fieldwork findings to show how complicated and diverse the Ghanaian and Somali communities were in Milton Keynes. This heterogeneity was, Chapter Five and Six argued, often overlooked by policy-makers and practitioners.

The emphasis on the relationship between place and processes of migrant settlement, particularly the need to consider the experiences of new multicultural spaces, led to the need to assess public policy approaches to multiculturalism and community cohesion within the UK generally and also specifically within the new city space of Milton Keynes in Chapters Three and Five in order to foreground understandings of how comfortably the approaches of policy-makers and practitioners sat with the realities of the population to which they were applied.

### **7.3 Multicultural policy-making and community engagement practices**

The historical trajectory of policy approaches to issues of race, community and multiculturalism within the UK was explored in Chapter Three. A shift was charted within policy approaches from early approaches which sought to achieve a culturally homogenous society through processes of integration and assimilation; to multiculturalist approaches which were more 'tolerant' of difference and encouraged the recognition and representation of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity; to those emphasising stronger social bonds or 'cohesion' between individuals and communities and a set of shared values that all citizens would adhere

to. It was the community cohesion policy agenda that dominated the period in which this research was conducted.

One of the arguments made in Chapter Three was that there needed to be more of an appreciation within both local and national policy discourse of the potential opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of multicultural, community cohesion and social inclusion initiatives presented by new and diverse urban spaces such as Milton Keynes. Following on from the argument put forward in Chapter Two that focusing on place enabled a greater appreciation of the significance of local spaces of intercultural contact, Chapter Three looked at some of the cohesion policy initiatives implemented nationally aimed at fostering inter-cultural interaction and dialogue, for example, citizenship ceremonies for new migrants, citizenship education for all school pupils as part of the national curriculum as well as 'national days' aiming to create respect for the traditions and heritage of all citizens (Cantle 2004, p. 8, 14). Thinking back to Chapter Two these approaches also relied on relatively fixed notions of 'communities' which fit the cohesion agenda's approach of managing multiculturalism and simultaneously failed to acknowledge the diversity of experiences that existed within these restrictive definitions.

Chapter Three noted the resurgence of more restrictive approaches to citizenship and shared values within national policy and the contradictions of this with counter terrorism (PVE) initiatives. Chapter Five explored these in policy approaches and contradictions in multicultural policy-making within the context of a new city space with no history of tension, conflict or terrorism activity.

Chapter Five used the fieldwork findings to demonstrate how the attempts of policy-makers to manage and respond to a newly multicultural context had a direct impact on the way that communities were both viewed and engaged with. Observations from the field and interviews with community leaders such as Ibrahim and Hakim presented in Chapter Six indicated that the issue of community engagement practices (and the influence of the leaders of community organisations and associations) was heavily influenced by the funding practices of the local authority and other local third sector organisations that, in funding individual community organisations or associations, were arguably reinforcing – and even creating – these divisions.

The debates about attachments to national identity and sets of shared 'core values', in the context of an inclusive British citizenship, ignore the complexities and diversities within migrant communities which were powerfully narrated by research participants in Chapter Six. Their accounts of being British, being Milton Keynes, being European and being African was evidence of their extremely varied and highly complex migratory patterns. Many young people in particular had not moved by choice but rather as part of a family unit, some having made several moves (in some cases with further moves planned) in their lifetime and often had strong feelings of attachment to other places lived along the way.

Chapter Three argued that studies on cohesion typically take place within areas experiencing greater instances of social and economic deprivation such as Bradford, Oldham and Burnley (Cantle 2001; Clarke 2001; Denham 2001; Ouseley 2001; Ritchie 2001) and that little was known about what was happening in terms of



cohesion in newly multicultural areas experiencing social and economic growth. As Letki (2007, p. 1) has argued, there was no evidence to support the conclusions of the reports into these areas that there was a breakdown of social connectedness in diverse communities and this research has shown that in the context of Milton Keynes there has not been a breakdown of social cohesion as it has emerged as an increasingly ethnically diverse city.

The development of multicultural policy-making within Milton Keynes was reviewed in light of the city's rapid population growth. Chapter Five noted how the city has gone from having a limited history of multicultural living and policy-making to becoming a more multicultural, ethnically diverse population and developing a relatively extensive policy architecture. While these policy initiatives were portrayed by various overseeing partnerships and strategies as part of a fairly linear process, research observations suggested that this activity was far more complicated, dispersed and fragmented. Examples of this lack of partnership working between different departments within the local authority working on very similar areas were provided to demonstrate this fragmentation and the way that it can damage the effectiveness of these initiatives and go towards answering Research Question Five of this thesis on the effectiveness of multicultural, community cohesion and social inclusion initiatives.

The shift within local policy away from race equality and multiculturalism and towards notions of cohesive communities was also highlighted. Issues such as race and multiculturalism are not completely absent (as Milton Keynes itself wishes to be 'known for its diversity' and there are mandatory race equality requirements such as

the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000). However, explicit references to race and multiculturalism within both local and national initiatives were less common in the interviews and fieldwork and it was much more likely that the language, documents and various initiatives were dominated by the community cohesion agenda and issues of race equality and multiculturalism were dealt with implicitly, as part of broader cohesion strategies.

Tensions between policy strategy and implementation, as well as a tension between sometimes conflicting national agendas such as community cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism, were noted after several participants suggested that furthering the PVE agenda actually reduced levels of community cohesion, which they were also required to promote. Chapter Five highlighted the lack of a consensus among policy makers around key terms such as multiculturalism and cohesion despite the main aim of the cohesion strategy being to develop a common understanding of what cohesion means. Chapter Five examined how this lack of consensus around meaning contributed to the fragmentation within the local policies noted above and also resulted in tensions and uncertainties about local and national-level policy directives and between local policy networks and organisations.

The concern among policy-makers and practitioners within Milton Keynes to manage the emergent multicultural population relied heavily on assumptions that communities existed in a readily identifiable way and, from this, identifying community organisations (and their leaders) with whom they could liaise. This policy process of assuming or 'making up' fixed and stable migrant Black African 'communities' was discussed in Chapter Five. This approach was recognised as

problematic by those policy-maker participants who acknowledged that as a result of the rapid and constant population change and growth within Milton Keynes it was extremely difficult to predict needs, resources and issues when they had little detailed knowledge as to who was arriving and/or leaving the city. But engaging with migrant communities as though they were stable and fixed was part of the formal Milton Keynes Council attempt to respond to diversifying city populations, i.e. by treating BME and/ or migrant groups as homogenous or engaging with the leader of a community association on behalf of all members of that population. But this was not straightforward and Milton Keynes Council policy-makers, recognising some of the uncertainties as to whom migrant populations were, also relied on what they described as their 'informal networks' to engage with communities. However, these networks were themselves often influenced by the most active and engaging community group or association representatives and were, arguably, quite formal themselves.

Chapter Five developed policy understandings from Chapter Three and argued that in their efforts to respond to diversity community engagement practices within Milton Keynes Council often over-looked and failed to appreciate the diversity which existed within the city's populations and was therefore more likely to fall short of delivering appropriate resources and interventions. New city spaces like Milton Keynes typified by growth and change were found to offer the opportunity to critically evaluate how government views and engages with its populations on both a local and national level, placing an emphasis on acknowledging the fluidity which often exists within certain 'communities'. A move away from approaches of working

through fixed and unchanging notions of 'communities' and towards a recognition of the significance of convivial everyday encounters and the locally grounded notions of 'community' within specific places (as suggested in Chapter Two) was put forward. Local authority approaches to engaging with 'communities' were inextricably linked to questions of community formation and the reliance upon community leaders and representatives, as well as intercultural contact within new and constantly growing community populations, groups and associations which were elaborated on in Chapter Six.

#### **7.4 Community formation: 'everyday' interactions and 'living together, apart'**

Chapter Six was concerned with understanding modes of community formation within the Milton Keynes context. It developed understandings of place and community from Chapter Two and used fieldwork data to highlight the difficulties with the community engagement practices that were discussed in Chapter Five. Chapter Six was also concerned with describing how, as a result of differences in migration histories, language, culture and identity as well as faith and religious practices and generational differences, Ghanaian and Somali migrant populations need to be recognised as containing individuals with diverse and different identities and experiences. As such the 'communities' to which cohesion policies refer, with whom policy-makers wish to engage, and for whom community representatives seek to represent, should be understood as forming (and not simply arriving) within that space.

Expanding on the notion of managing multicultural identified in Chapter Five, Chapter Six suggested that significant attempts are made to 'make-up communities' inadequately acknowledging the extent to which they are diverse and heterogeneous, both by those who act (or are identified) as community leaders hoping to secure funding and support and by Council officers tasked with engaging with local 'communities'. The process was somewhat of a self-fulfilling prophecy as while the local authority was seeking to engage with the leaders of community associations in order to reach their communities these leaders were simultaneously aware that by mobilising themselves as representatives of an entire population they were able to satisfy this desire and champion the needs and interests of their organisations members.

Responses from research participants, particularly the young Ghanaian and Somali origin participants revealed the differences which existed within seemingly simplistic definitions of 'Ghanaian' and 'Somali' communities in areas such as migration history, language, culture, economic status, age and religious practice. These differences and complexities suggested that in many cases community organisations and associations based around these definitions may mask as much as they reveal and were complicit in the treatment of these 'communities' as relatively fixed by the local authority. The fragmentation of both the Ghanaian and Somali community associations along various lines including ethnic group, language, migration history and age noted in Chapter Six highlighted this. Local populations within Milton Keynes were found during the course of this project's empirical research to be continuously reshaped by on-going, complex and diverse migration

histories. The transnational connections and diasporic identities which accompanied these migration patterns brought pre-existing simplistic definitions of 'community' into question and, speaking to Research Question One, presented challenges to both policy-making and community engagement as well as to the structure of migrant community organisations themselves in keeping up with these demographic changes.

Despite some of the difficulties presented by the city's landscape and the changing nature of Milton Keynes' population, the research found that ethnic diversity in Milton Keynes appeared as a state of unpanicked 'living apart, together'. In other words the perspectives of the research participants and the field work observations showed processes of negotiation and of both 'mixing' and 'non-mixing' within certain distinct social and geographic contexts. As a city it is the site of both regular and relatively extensive social bonding activities among its Somali and Ghanaian migrant populations but also regular convivial everyday interactions, particularly among young people who commented on the ways and contexts in which they practiced mixing and non-mixing with those from different backgrounds as appropriate. Chapter Six concluded that people within Milton Keynes are not living the 'parallel lives' crisis of the community cohesion discourse. Rather, 'living apart' at times such as during ethnic minority or migrant community events or religious worship does not preclude also 'living together' at other times, for example at school and when participating in shared interests and common activities. How people themselves manage multiculturalism is shown in this study of the Milton Keynes

context to be much more fluid and able to be negotiated than cohesion discourses and formal policy makers imagine and assume.

## **7.5 Researching multicultural in new city spaces**

Researching issues of multicultural and community within Milton Keynes identified some particular challenges related to the city's short multicultural history and its relative inexperience in dealing with this increasing diversity in public policy terms. Chapter Four argued that the study of new city spaces is important because it offers both researchers and policy-makers alternative understandings of not only the challenges but also the opportunities presented by diverse communities by looking at them in a different context. Using Milton Keynes as the case-study site for this research set it within the context of a wider shift in race studies to appreciating new geographical contexts (such as studies of ethnicity and the countryside e.g. Neal 2002; Chakraborti and Garland 2004; Ray and Reed 2005; Neal and Agyeman 2006), representing a change to the dominant focus of academic work on issues relating to 'race', ethnic and community relations within the UK's major cities such as London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Bristol. The research noted that northern cities and towns such as Bradford and Burnley had also been the focus of official inquiry based research (Cantle 2001; Cantle 2004; Denham 2002). However, Milton Keynes has not been a focus of diversity and ethnicity research. Nor does it have a significant multicultural or BME migrant history or high rates of segregation, poverty or deprivation, but rather pockets of deprivation surrounded by overall growth. It is possible that the newness of Milton Keynes' multicultural experience and its lack of significant or entrenched community tensions or conflict aided the research

experience in finding, as it did, that the research (and researcher) received an overwhelmingly positive response and high levels of support both from policy-makers and practitioners and the communities themselves. It is possible, for example, that the same may not have been the case if the research was conducted in an area with significant conflict or tensions.

One of the most significant aspects of this research into issues of multicultural and community in new city spaces was its origins as an ESRC CASE studentship collaboration between the Open University and Milton Keynes Council. As a result of this collaboration the project straddled both the academic and policy arenas and facilitated a two-way exchange of ideas and approaches while providing a level of access to local authority staff, policy and processes which would not have been possible otherwise. This in itself could be taken as a sign of the receptiveness of Milton Keynes Council to recognising its emergent multicultural population and its receptiveness to evidence informed policy-making. The collaborative nature of the project helped to reinforce the generally open and accommodating nature of research participants from the local authority. This could be attributed to the newness of the issues in question within the area or the sense of rapport with (and insider status of) the researcher as a result of the ESRC CASE partnership. The same also broadly applied to participants from the migrant communities. This is attributed in the research, in part, to the status of individuals as community leaders and the desire to support research into the experiences of their communities, as well as reinforcing their role as community representatives. The multifaceted and interdisciplinary nature of the project also created the scope for identifying



opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of local policy-making in initiatives relating to multicultural, community cohesion and social inclusion in addition to the expectation of an original contribution to academic knowledge. Chapter Four spent time discussing the dissemination strategy of the findings and the nature of the well-attended mid-project public event in the summer of 2010.

The research adopted a multi-method qualitative case-study approach combining documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observation and the CASE partnership with Milton Keynes Council offered the research a far greater level of access to local policy documents, policy makers and the local policy world than would have been possible otherwise. In many cases the policy documents reviewed were the first of their kind in the local area. This served to highlight the newness of the local authority's somewhat experimental approach to multicultural policy initiatives (and the steps towards their implementation) locally. Chapter Four suggested that being in both the policy and the academic worlds as a PhD student allowed particular insights and access to participants and policy settings that would have not been open to me otherwise. My own Milton Keynes identity also meant that I had a body of local, social and geographic knowledge which I drew on in various ways, for example to build rapport, or in that I was able to more quickly understand localities, organisations and people being referred to during the fieldwork experience. As Chapter Four argued, in a project that involved very diverse groups of participants, my own social and local resources assisted with my ability to secure Ghanaian and Somali participation in the project.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

In researching multicultural, community and social inclusion in Milton Keynes this thesis has highlighted the presence of new geographies of multicultural in the UK outside of the large urban areas that are most commonly assessed as part of academic investigations and local and national policy initiatives. In doing so it has made a case for the need for further research into issues of multicultural and community outside of these traditional settings. It has also offered insight into the new experiences of local policy-makers in these newly diverse and multicultural contexts in managing a local population that is increasingly diverse and constantly changing, re-shaping and unpredictable in nature.

The findings of this research have indicated that notions of community on the national and local levels are identified as a problem affecting – and also the solution to – social disharmony. It is suggested in community cohesion discourse that the balance of ‘bonding’ activities which serve to strengthen attachments within groups and ‘bridging’ activities which are believed to involve engaging and becoming involved with those from outside immediate community groupings needs to weigh more heavily towards the latter in order to increase levels of social harmony and cohesion among local communities. This research has highlighted how concepts of community which are relied upon at both local and national levels in multicultural policy-making may fail to acknowledge the diversity of experiences which exist within these groupings. This research has offered the opportunity to consider moving past relatively fixed notions of ‘communities’ in community engagement practices and allows for a greater appreciation of the diversity of experiences, identities and

backgrounds which exist within these definitions. As such, the thesis has demonstrated the various heterogeneities of migrant communities which are often treated uniformly and also the different levels of capacity and capital possessed and how these have been utilised to support processes of settlement. Most importantly this research has shown that multicultural populations exist outside of the UK's large urban centres and that the experiences of local residents in these new contexts cannot be understood in terms of either segregation or cohesion but rather as 'living together, apart', of both mixing and non-mixing within a wider context of regular everyday encounters and negotiations.

# Appendix A: Interview Participants

---

---

### Policy-makers

Interview Date	Name	Position	Organisation
30 <sup>th</sup> December 2008	Ahmad	Corporate Equalities Officer	Strategy and Regeneration Team, Milton Keynes Council
22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2009 & 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	Rebecca	Head of Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Support Service (EMASS)	EMASS, Milton Keynes Council
29 <sup>th</sup> December 2008	David	Community Safety Manager	Crime & Community Safety, Milton Keynes Council

---

### Policy -Practitioners

Interview Date	Name	Position	Organisation
8 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	Vicky	Regeneration Officer	Strategy and Regeneration Team, Milton Keynes Council
8 <sup>th</sup> January 2009	Aisha	BME Community Development Officer	Children and Young People, Milton Keynes Council
4 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	Jamilla	Community Worker for New Arrivals (Western Expansion Area)	Community and Economic Development, Milton Keynes Council

---

### Youth Workers

Interview Date	Name	Position	Organisation
16 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	Yusuf	South Central Area Youth Worker	Jonathon's Youth Project (Beanhill), Children and Young People, Milton Keynes Council
2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2009	Michelle	South East Area Outreach Youth Worker	Jonathon's Youth Project (Beanhill), Children and Young People, Milton Keynes Council
15 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	Matthew	Youth Service Officer	Children and Young People, Milton Keynes Council

15 <sup>th</sup> June 2009	Joanna	Youth Participation Worker & MKCYPR Worker	Children and Young People, Milton Keynes Council
----------------------------	--------	--	--

## Voluntary Sector

Interview Date	Name	Position	Organisation
18 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	Kelly	Community Mobiliser for Fishermead	MKCVO
3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2009 & 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	Gita	Director	Milton Keynes Equality Council

## Educationalists

Interview Date	Name	Position	Organisation
27 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Fatima	Ethnic Minority Support Assistant	EMASS, Milton Keynes Council based in Sir Frank Markham Secondary School
27 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Lydia	EMASS Mentor for the Newly Arrived Base	EMASS, Milton Keynes Council based in Sir Frank Markham Secondary School
8 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	Ashley	EAL Co-Ordinator	St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School
8 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	Kate	Deputy Head	St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School
8 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	Mary	Head teacher	St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School
24 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	Sandra	EMASS Mentor	EMASS, Milton Keynes Council based in Southwood School (Primary)
4 <sup>th</sup> June 2009	Jennifer	Deputy Head	EMASS, Milton Keynes Council based in Southwood School (Primary)
13 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	Rachel	Head of Ethnic Minority Achievement Team	Lord Grey School (Secondary)



---

### Community Leaders

Interview Date	Name	Position	Organisation
18 <sup>th</sup> March 2009 & 30 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Hakim	Chairperson	Somali Community Council & AdvantageMK
5 <sup>th</sup> July 2009	Albert	Chairperson	Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes
30 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Ibrahim	Chairperson	Horn Of Africa Welfare Association

---

---

### Religious Leaders

20 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	Cyril	Preacher	On Eagles Wings Church
22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2009	Emmanuel	Church Reverend	Rhema International Church

---

## Appendix B: Focus Group Participants

---



---

### Sir Frank Markham School Focus Group (Somali)

29<sup>th</sup> June 2009

Name	Age	Gender	Migration History
Bilaal	16	Male	Born in Holland and then moved directly to MK 9 years ago.
Aideed	17	Male	Born in Somalia, then grew up in Sweden, then moved to Coventry for a 'little while' and then to MK.
Iqra	15	Female	Born and raised in Sweden until she was 10, then moved to Nottingham for 3.5 years, then moved to MK.
Amaani	15	Female	Born and grew up in Sweden, then lived in Holland for 'a few years', then moved to MK.

---

### Horn of Africa Welfare Association Focus Group (Somali)

17<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Name	Age	Gender	Migration History
Anwar	17	Male	Born and raised in Norway, then moved to Sheffield when he was six for a year and then moved to MK where has been for '10 years or so'.
Dube	16	Male	Born in Holland, moved to London when he was 7 and then to MK where he has lived for four years.
Essa	15	Male	Born and raised in Holland then moved to England 'a few years ago'.
Faisal	15	Male	Born and raised in Holland then moved to England 'a few years ago'.
Fuad	16	Male	Born and raised in Norway then moved to England 'a few weeks ago'.

---

---

**AGMK Focus Group (Ghanaian)****16<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

Name	Age	Gender	Migration History
Felix	18	Male	Born in Holland and then moved directly to MK when he was 13 years old.
Dominic	18	Male	Born and raised in MK.
Alfred	18	Male	Born and raised in MK.

---

---

**On Eagles Wings Church Focus Group (Ghanaian)****21<sup>st</sup> June 2009**

Name	Age	Gender	Migration History
Dora	17	Female	Born in London then moved to MK when she was five.
Timothy	18	Male	Born in London then moved to MK when he was five.
Justin	18	Male	Born and raised in London until he was seven, then moved to Holland, then moved back to London and then moved to MK when he was seven.
Janice	22	Female	Born and raised in London until she was seven, then moved to Holland, then moved back to London and then moved to MK for secondary school.
Akosua	16	Female	Born and raised in MK.
Earl	16	Male	Born in London, then moved to Ghana for six years, then moved back to London about two years ago before moving to MK this year.
Charles	17	Male	Born and raised in Germany where he lived for 10 years before moving directly to MK in 2003.

---

---

**Rhema International Church Focus Group (Ghanaian)****24<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Migration History</b>
<b>Prince</b>	16	Male	Born in London and lived there for 10 years before moving to MK.
<b>Dylan</b>	14	Male	Born in London and lived there for 10 years before moving to MK.
<b>Debbie</b>	15	Female	Born and raised in in MK.
<b>Abena</b>	18	Female	Born and raised in in MK.
<b>Akua</b>	16	Female	Born and raised in MK.
<b>Jessica</b>	20	Female	Born and raised in London for 13 years before moving to MK.

# Appendix C:

## Focus Group Guide

---



	CORE questions	Follow-Up questions
<b>Intro</b>	1. How would you describe MK to someone who had never visited?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think MK is a good place to live?</li> <li>• Name some of the things you really like and some of the things you really dislike about MK</li> </ul>
<b>Multiculture</b>	2. DISCUSSION STATEMENT "MK is a place where <i>young people</i> from many different backgrounds get along well with each other".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think MK will become more mixed, more divided or stay as it is?</li> <li>• How do you see the future for Ghanaians/Somalis (delete as appropriate) in MK?</li> </ul>
<b>Communities</b>	3. Do you feel part of any communities and if so which 'communities' do you feel you are a part of?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you know most friends (e.g. school, family, church, local area, youth group etc.)?</li> <li>• Where and how do you mostly spend your leisure time?</li> <li>• What role(s) does (church/mosque/youth group, family) play in your life?</li> </ul>
<b>Identities</b>	4. How would you describe yourself (e.g. culture, residential area, school, parents etc.)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is living in MK a significant part of your identity?</li> </ul>
<b>New City</b>	5. Do you think of MK as a city?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is it like living in a city that is constantly changing?</li> </ul>

# Appendix D: Interview Guide

---

---

## MULTICULTURE CORE QUESTION

**Do you think Milton Keynes is thought of as multicultural?**

---

### *Prompt Questions*

- What does that bring?
- Does it make it a different place?
- How does it affect the city?
- Opportunities/benefits?
- Challenges/tensions?

---

### *Issues of Interest*

- School diversity and contact between children of different backgrounds?
  - Cultural awareness/understanding?
  - Mixed and inclusive neighbourhoods?
  - Tension Monitoring?
  - Provision of appropriate facilities?
  - Resentment in facilities allocation?
  - Testing levels of racial tolerance?
- 

---

## COMMUNITIES CORE QUESTION

**What does 'community' mean in Milton Keynes?**

---

### *Prompt Questions*

- Is there a collective sense of 'community' in MK?
- Affected by diversity of MK?
- How do concepts of 'community' affect Council working practices?

---

### *Issues of Interest*

- Feelings of community
  - Interpretations of concepts of 'community'
  - Policy
-

---

## NEW CITIES CORE QUESTION

**Do you think Milton Keynes being a new city has an effect upon how well people get on with each other?**

---

### *Prompt Questions*

- If so, what?

---

### *Issues of Interest*

- Affluence and expansion
  - Geography – spaces of interaction e.g. shops
  - Absence of history
  - Absence of entrenched community
  - Effect of young population?
  - above average black African population in city
- 

---

## COHESION CORE QUESTION

**Have you been involved with any attempts to increase cohesion in MK?**

---

### *Prompt Questions*

- Can you describe them?
- What were their collective aims?
- Were they successful?
- Why? Why not?

---

### *Issues of Interest*

- Sharing common interests?
  - Places where people come together e.g. schools, community centres, youth centres, shops, post office, workplace, public transport etc.?
  - Positive neighbourhood image? E.g. cleanliness, low crime rates etc.
  - Sharing common histories, backgrounds, religions, ethnicities?
-



## Appendix E:

### Interview and Focus Group Participant Information Sheets

---



The Open University

**Jamie Kesten**

Department of Geography  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
The Open University  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
United Kingdom  
MK7 6AA

Tel +44 (0) 7720 290 878  
Fax +44 (0) 1908 654 698  
[j.kesten@open.ac.uk](mailto:j.kesten@open.ac.uk)

### Interview Participant Information Sheet

**Project Title:** Multiculture, Community and Social Inclusion in New City Spaces

**Researcher:** Jamie Kesten (contact details above)

**Introduction:** Hi my name is Jamie Kesten and I am inviting you to take part in my research project looking at the different ways in which diverse communities become settled and integrated into new urban spaces like Milton Keynes. The project is particularly interested in the experiences of young people and focuses specifically on Ghanaian and Somali migrants, as the 'Black African' population of Milton Keynes is above the national average. Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask if there is anything that is not clear.

**Do I have to take part?** No. The research is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. If you decide to participate, you will be given this information sheet to keep and you will also be asked to sign a consent form (signed by a parent/guardian if under 18 years old).

**What will happen?** An informal one-to-one discussion between you and I. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded, so I can transcribe our meeting. I will keep the interview as short as possible and I can arrange the interviews for a day and time that is convenient to you all, any travel expenses will be reimbursed and refreshments will be provided.

**Can I participate anonymously?** Yes. Participants' real names will not be used at any point. There is also a strategy for dealing with significant disclosures judged to breach the limits of confidentiality which is available upon request.

**How will I benefit?** Whilst there are no immediate benefits for taking part in the project, it is hoped that this research will help identify opportunities for improving relationships between different groups living within Milton Keynes.

**What if I want further information or have concerns?** This research is being supervised by three academics at The Open University whom you may also contact via email, Professor Allan Cochrane ([a.d.cochrane@open.ac.uk](mailto:a.d.cochrane@open.ac.uk)), Dr Sarah Neal ([s.neal@open.ac.uk](mailto:s.neal@open.ac.uk)) and Dr Giles Mohan ([g.mohan@open.ac.uk](mailto:g.mohan@open.ac.uk)). Further details about me and the project can be found at: [http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/about-the-faculty/departments/geography/postgraduate/profiles/jamie\\_kesten.php](http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/about-the-faculty/departments/geography/postgraduate/profiles/jamie_kesten.php).

**Who is funding the research?** This PhD Studentship has been funded as an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) CASE award in partnership with Milton Keynes Council.

**Who has reviewed the research?** In addition to my supervisors, the Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee (HPMEC) at The Open University have reviewed this research.

**Feedback:** Feedback will be given at appropriate times following field research and in the concluding months of thesis preparation to ensure that you remain informed of research findings and that accuracy of research data is maintained.

Thank you for your time and for hopefully taking part in this piece of research, your contribution is very much appreciated.

**Jamie Kesten**



The Open University

**Jamie Kesten**

Department of Geography  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
The Open University  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
United Kingdom  
MK7 6AA

Tel +44 (0) 7720 290 878

Fax +44 (0) 1908 654 698

[j.kesten@open.ac.uk](mailto:j.kesten@open.ac.uk)

### Focus Group Participant Information Sheet

**Project Title:** Multiculture, Community and Social Inclusion in New City Spaces

**Introduction:** Hi my name is Jamie Kesten and I am inviting you to take part in my research project looking at the different ways in which diverse communities become settled and integrated into new urban spaces like Milton Keynes. The project is interested in the experiences of young people and focuses specifically on Ghanaian and Somali migrants, as the 'Black African' population of Milton Keynes is above the national average. Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask if there is anything that is not clear.

**Do I have to take part?** No. The research is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. If you decide to participate, you will be given this information sheet to keep and you will also be asked to sign a consent form (signed by a parent/guardian if under 18 years old).

**What will happen?** A small group discussion involving you and a few other participants. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded, so I can transcribe our meeting. I will keep the interview as short as possible and I can arrange the interviews for a day and time that is convenient to you all, any travel expenses will be reimbursed and refreshments will be provided.

**Can I participate anonymously?** Yes. Participants' real names will not be used at any point. There is also a strategy for dealing with significant disclosures judged to breach the limits of confidentiality which is available upon request.

**What are the benefits?** It is hoped that this research will help identify opportunities for improving relationships between different groups living within Milton Keynes. Also, each participant will be treated to pizza and will receive a gift certificate to thank them for their participation.

**What if I want further information or have concerns?** This research is being supervised by three academics at The Open University whom you may also contact via email, Professor Allan Cochrane ([a.d.cochrane@open.ac.uk](mailto:a.d.cochrane@open.ac.uk)), Dr Sarah Neal ([s.neal@open.ac.uk](mailto:s.neal@open.ac.uk)) and Dr Giles Mohan ([g.mohan@open.ac.uk](mailto:g.mohan@open.ac.uk)). Further details about me and the project can be found at: [http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/about-the-faculty/departments/geography/postgraduate/profiles/jamie\\_kesten.php](http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/about-the-faculty/departments/geography/postgraduate/profiles/jamie_kesten.php).

**Who is funding the research?** This PhD Studentship has been funded as an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) CASE award in partnership with Milton Keynes Council.

**Who has reviewed the research?** In addition to my supervisors, the Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee (HPMEC) at The Open University have reviewed this research.

**Feedback:** Feedback will be given at appropriate times following field research and in the concluding months of thesis preparation to ensure that you remain informed of research findings and that accuracy of research data is maintained.

Thank you for your time and for hopefully taking part in this piece of research, your contribution is very much appreciated.

**Jamie Kesten**

**Appendix F:**  
**Participant Consent Form**

---



The Open University

**Jamie Kesten**

Department of Geography  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
The Open University  
Walton Hall  
Milton Keynes  
United Kingdom  
MK7 6AA

Tel +44 (0) 7720 290 878  
Fax +44 (0) 1908 654 698  
[j.kesten@open.ac.uk](mailto:j.kesten@open.ac.uk)

### Consent Form

**Title:** Multiculture, community and social inclusion in new city spaces

**Researcher:** Jamie Kesten (contact details above)

1. I have read and understood the participant information sheet for the above study and had the opportunity to ask questions *(please tick box)* ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason *(please tick box)* ☐
3. I agree to take part in the above study *(please tick box)* ☐
4. I agree to the interview / focus group being audio recorded *(please tick box)* ☐
5. I agree to the use of quotes in publications *(please tick box)* ☐
6. I understand that the researcher will hold all information and data collected securely and in confidence and that all efforts will be made to ensure that I cannot be identified as a participant in the study (except as might be required by law) and I give permission for the researchers to hold relevant personal data which will not be used unless agreed *(please tick box)* ☐

**Name of participant:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of researcher:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G: Interim Report to Milton Keynes Council

---

## **ESRC CASE Studentship:**

### **'Multiculture, community and social inclusion in new city spaces'**

### **Year One Interim Report**

A summary of progress made within Year One of a three year ESRC CASE Studentship on the dynamics of multicultural community formation in new urban spaces such as Milton Keynes, a collaboration between the Open University and Milton Keynes Council.

Open University

Jamie Kesten

May 2008



## **Contents**

<b><u>1. Executive Summary</u></b>	<b>2</b>
<b><u>2. Introduction</u></b>	<b>4</b>
<b><u>3. Studentship Goals</u></b>	<b>5</b>
<b><u>4. Year One – The project framework</u></b>	<b>6</b>
4.1 <u>Activities</u>	
4.2 <u>Reviews and reports completed</u>	
4.3 <u>Analysing academic theory</u>	
4.4 <u>The Policy reports, the research questions and Milton Keynes</u>	
4.4.1 <u>Residential segregation</u>	
4.4.2 <u>Mono-cultural schools</u>	
4.4.3 <u>Poverty and deprivation</u>	
4.4.4 <u>Allocation of funding</u>	
4.4.5 <u>New housing developments</u>	
4.4.6 <u>Civic participation and cross-cultural contact</u>	
<b><u>5. Year Two – Moving the project forward</u></b>	<b>15</b>
5.1 <u>Semi-structured interviews</u>	
5.2 <u>Focus groups</u>	
5.3 <u>Participant observation</u>	
5.4 <u>Research Ethics</u>	
<b><u>6. Conclusion</u></b>	<b>17</b>
<b><u>7. References</u></b>	<b>18</b>



## **I. Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

The studentship was established through a partnership between the Open University and Milton Keynes Council as a result of a shared interest in the dynamics of multicultural community formation in new urban spaces such as Milton Keynes (MK).

### **Studentship Goals**

The principal goal of this studentship is to investigate the ways in which multiculturally constituted communities become established in new urban spaces. Ghanaian and Somali residents of MK were identified as case study groups because the 'Black African' population of MK is now the second largest BME population in the city. It was also felt that using these two groups would help to deconstruct the notion of 'Black African' as a homogenous experience by contrasting different processes of inclusion into a new city.

### **Year One**

#### **Residential segregation**

- Key policy reports on integration and cohesion identify residential segregation as one of the greatest barriers to facilitating multicultural exchange (interaction or communication between different cultural groups).
- Entrenched residential segregation does not currently exist in MK city-wide; however evidence suggests that many migrant groups are clustering in deprived areas of the city which may affect levels of integration, cross-cultural contact and quality of life (MK Social Atlas, 2007).

#### **Mono-cultural schools**

- Since MK has not experienced the entrenched residential segregation characteristic of long-established urban areas it is also yet to experience wholly mono-cultural schools.
- Since Somalis are far more residentially concentrated than Ghanaians within the city they will also be more heavily concentrated in a small number of schools. This may affect the resources of those schools, e.g. language support.

#### **Poverty and deprivation**

- Despite pockets of intense deprivation MK is characterised by growth and therefore not the usual context for looking at multiculturally constituted communities.
- Gaining an understanding of the link between cohesion and deprivation in new city spaces could unearth opportunities and challenges for MK.

### **Allocation of funding**

- MK has received relatively little regeneration funding city-wide, almost all of which has been spent in Netherfield, Wolverton and Bletchley.
- Managing the distribution of funding and balancing 'bonding' and 'bridging' activities will be a key challenge for Milton Keynes Council on the road to achieving a cohesive and integrated community.

### **New housing developments**

- Every new housing development in MK represents an opportunity for lived forms of integration, community cohesion and multicultural exchange. It will be particularly interesting to discover the effect of new housing developments on the case study groups as evidence suggests that more Ghanaians may live in these new areas than Somalis.

### **Civic participation and cross-cultural contact**

- Policy reports placed great emphasis on the role of local areas on their own levels of integration and cohesion, including local government, community organisations and local people.
- It is worth discovering the impact of local and national identities and concepts of social citizenship on migrant groups in Milton Keynes, also evaluating the effect of shared values and interests on rates of cross-cultural contact.

## **Year Two**

During the course of year two I envisage conducting **semi-structured interviews** with key MK figures from the MK Youth Forum, MK Youth Participation Team, MK Racial Equality Council, MK Local Strategic Partnership, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Service (EMASS) and the Youth Participation Team. I will interview key figures in institutions at the heart of local communities such as head teachers, home-school liaison officers and religious leaders as well as key figures in social organisations at the centre of the migrant populations themselves such as the Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes and the Somali Community Council. In order to gain a deeper understanding of notions of attachment, belonging and inclusion I plan to set up a series of up to six **focus groups** which would be conducted with members of these social organisations and with a snowball sample of local Ghanaian and Somali residents in the city. There will also be some **participant observation** at key Council, local and migratory formal and informal community events.

## **Conclusion**

Three years of critical analysis of academic theory as well as national and local public policy, combined with primary research will ultimately lead to the production of a PhD thesis of approximately 100,000 words. Therefore, the final year will consist mainly of a process of writing up my research findings for the thesis, while Milton Keynes Council will also be kept up to date throughout via annual interim reports and presentations alongside ongoing consultation with relevant council figures.

## **2. Introduction**

I was attracted to this studentship because I was born and raised in Milton Keynes and have a personal attachment to its success as a new city. I experienced the richness of its diversity at an early age and became interested in the various communities which came to settle here. After completing an MSc in Ethnicity and Multiculturalism at Bristol University I was eager to use what I had learnt to gain a better understanding of the minority ethnic communities in Milton Keynes.

CASE studentships provide opportunities for PhD students to gain first hand experience of work outside an academic environment through the support of both academic and non-academic supervisors. This particular studentship has been established through a partnership between the Department of Geography at the Open University and the Learning and Development Directorate at Milton Keynes Council as a result of a shared interest in the dynamics of multicultural community formation in new urban spaces such as Milton Keynes.

This report first outlines the studentships original goals and research questions as agreed by the supervisory team at the Open University (Professor Allan Cochrane, Dr Giles Mohan and Dr Sarah Neal) and Milton Keynes Council (Kewal Goel, School Improvement Advisor and Head of EMASS – Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Support Service). Next it details the work which has taken place in Year One of the studentship, including a detailed breakdown of the key issues, questions and challenges identified by key policy reports and academic debates and how they relate to Milton Keynes and the project's research questions. Finally it highlights the primary research that will be conducted in Year Two of the studentship.

### **3. Studentship Goals**

The principal goal of this studentship is to investigate the ways in which multiculturally constituted communities become established in new urban spaces. Central government initiatives have typically sought to tackle issues such as social exclusion in the context of neighbourhood decline. However, new cities like Milton Keynes offer the unique opportunity of addressing such issues by focusing instead on developing forms of inclusive growth.

Ghanaian and Somali residents of Milton Keynes were identified as case study groups for two key reasons. Firstly the 'Black African' population of Milton Keynes is now the second largest BME population in the city having increased five-fold from just 0.3% in 1991 to 1.3% in 2003 (well above the national average of 0.95%) (Milton Keynes Council, 2003). This trend looks set to continue as the Milton Keynes Schools Spring Census 2007 revealed that 'Black Africans' now constitute 5.7% of the city's pupils, up from 4.8% the previous year (EMASS, 2007). Secondly, it was felt that using these two groups would help to deconstruct the notion of 'Black African' as a homogenous experience through the examination of the differences, difficulties, commonalities and successes of these two unique processes of inclusion into a new city.

The initial research questions of the studentship were:

1. What challenges and opportunities do more recently constituted multicultural city populations present to local government and formal and informal community structures?
2. How is social capital and formal and informal capacity within two migrant communities mobilised as a means of developing a sense of belonging to and being part of Milton Keynes and its communities?
3. How do particular loci work to create 'community-ness' (with a particular focus on the role of schools and religious centres in facilitating – or restricting – multicultural exchange and community well being)?
4. How do local government and organisations draw on and incorporate migrant communities' social capital in policy strategies to enable integrated settlement and participation in Milton Keynes' local communities?
5. What are the opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of multicultural, community cohesion and social inclusion initiatives within Milton Keynes and how might it serve as a case study exemplar for policy interventions in other localities which have both long and short multicultural histories?

#### **4. Year One - The project framework**

##### **4.1 Activities**

During the course of my first year I have attended several events. I presented the project plan for the studentship and fielded questions from other academics in the field at the Open University Centre for Citizenship, Identities and Governance (CCIG) workshop 'Migrations, Mobilities, Citizenship: Dialogues across boundaries' on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007. I also attended the Runnymede Trust Conference on 'Promoting Community Cohesion through schools' at the Barbican in London on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2007 which discussed issues such as the increase of faith and mono-cultural schools in Britain, their inability to promote community cohesion and measures to implement community cohesion through schools such as twinning projects, actively engineering school populations by ethnic group and controlling poor behaviour and abuse. The Identities workshop on 'Community Cohesion and Identity: Feedback from the front-line' at The Resource Centre in London on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2008 sought to understand experiences of best practice in community cohesion from those delivering it. Finally the 'Intercultural Cities' international conference in Liverpool, the European Capital of Culture for 2008, on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008 looked to analyse a selection of international examples of how different cultures can live together and turn mixing into economic, social and cultural advantage.

While at the OU this past year I have undergone extensive research skill training. After completing a skills audit which identified where both my strengths and weaknesses lay I enrolled on a course to improve academic writing and presentation techniques, took training on how to use referencing programmes, and attended U501 course classes on a variety of topics to help develop my all-around research skills. During this time I also attended several geography and postgraduate student seminars, fortnightly supervisory meetings to discuss my progress and have spent one day a week based at the Saxon Court offices of Milton Keynes Council meeting with key figures and learning about the way the council works on issues of equality, cohesion, integration and community engagement.

The collaborative nature of my CASE studentship has lead to me meeting and talking at length to key Milton Keynes Council figures about my studentship and its interests and goals. These informal discussions with people such as Maryam Karim, the Community Development Officer for Black and Minority Ethnic Communities, Shane Downer, the Senior Heritage Development Officer, Dianne Taylor, the Senior Economic Development Officer, and Kewal Goel, the head of the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Support Service (EMASS) were extremely helpful in developing an understanding of Council approaches to issues of multicultural, community engagement, cohesion, integration and equality.

As a result of the level of cooperation I was afforded by Milton Keynes Council I was able to publish a short summary of my research aims in the Milton Keynes Council Tuesday Bulletin which is circulated to all council employees. Having read the bulletin Rosemary Clarke of Global Education Milton Keynes (GEM-K) made contact and we discussed the role of her organisation in developing a concept of 'global education' within the city as a means of using schools to facilitate multicultural exchange, a key

interest of this project and research question 3. Rosemary offered me invaluable signposting to other relevant bodies such as the 'Rich Identities' conference on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at Stantonbury Campus School. This was the culmination of several weeks of Year 6 students exploring their identities and those of other members of Milton Keynes' diverse communities. Living Archive was another organisation I was directed towards as they have detailed records of previous studies and interviews with my case study groups within the city which will prove a valuable resource for my studentship. The Tuesday bulletin also prompted contact from Emelia Obiri, a Ghanaian member of staff at Milton Keynes Council who is active within her Church youth group and interested in aiding the primary research phase of the project. In addition, there have been brief exchanges with Abid Hussain, the Corporate Equalities Officer, whom I envisage speaking to in more detail at a later date. I also envisage discussing my work in detail at a later stage with Jessica Tabbitt, the Milton Keynes Council Cohesion Officer.

I attended the Milton Keynes Community Cup and Exhibitions 2007 at Tattenhoe Pavilion, the Multicultural Day at Willen Lake 2007 funded by MK Community Foundation and met with a community organisation called Street Dreams which specialises in conflict resolution and engaging with young people around issues of cohesion and has produced several reports based on work in Bletchley and the Lakes Estate on behalf of Milton Keynes Council.

#### **4.2 Reviews and reports completed**

So far I have produced brief analytical reviews of:

- Cante (2001) 'Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team', London: Home Office
- Commission on Integration and Cohesion (COIC) (2007) 'Our Shared Future', Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).
- Commission for the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (CMEB) (2000) 'The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain', London: Profile Books.
- Runnymede Trust Conference on 'Promoting Community Cohesion Through Schools'
- 1990 Trust Workshop entitled 'Multiculturalism: Dead or Alive?'
- Theories of Interculturalism
- Gilroy, P. (1987) *Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Ghanaian diaspora and culture
- Somali diaspora and culture

I have also written more detailed papers and reports such as:

- Critiquing Community Cohesion Policy – a comparative review of the CMEB (2000), Cante (2001, 2004), and COIC (2007) reports
- Gilroy, Modood, Multiculturalism and Milton Keynes – bringing together two contrasting approaches to multicultural theory.

#### **4.3 Analysing academic theory**

My analysis of academic theory focused on the contrasting viewpoints of two significant social theorists on multiculturalism, Paul Gilroy and Tariq Modood.

For Gilroy, Britain's obsession with its former imperial and colonial might, its 'postcolonial melancholia', prevents postcolonial migrants and their descendents from accessing an inclusive shared sense of belonging (Gilroy, 2004:97). He states that while recognising that we have our differences, be they religious, ethnic or cultural, it is the need for a 'planetary humanism', i.e. the acknowledgement of the fact that "human beings are far more alike than they are unlike", that is necessary to foster an open and prosperous diverse society (Gilroy, 2004:4). In his opinion, the trend in Britain is of a shift away from a society characterized by a pluralistic acceptance and welcoming of diversity and difference (multiculturalism) and towards one of an enforced cultural homogeneity (integration and cohesion).

Modood warns against discussing multiculturalism solely in terms of difference and proposes a multicultural citizenship that places equal emphasis on what we have in common. He also acknowledges that many invocations of national identity have involved forms of ideological nationalism which have led to "exclusion, racism, military aggression, empires and much else" (Modood, 2007:148). However, unlike Gilroy (2004), he is optimistic about the possibility of disconnecting national identities from strong forms of nationalism. He believes that the logics of the national and the multicultural are not only compatible but necessary as part of his approach to multicultural citizenship which respects and values difference but also champion's commonality. Modood (2007:149) argues persuasively that it is illogical to encourage strong multicultural or minority identities and then seek weak common or national identities. Indeed this failing could arguably be most to blame for the divisive emphasis on difference and otherness that many critics of multiculturalism believe exists in parts of our society today.

Therefore when approaching issues of multicultural public policy in Milton Keynes Modood's argument for strong local and national identities borne out of an inclusive multicultural citizenship appears to be the most compelling approach to the challenges and opportunities presented by its migrant and minority ethnic communities. Gilroy's discussion of enforced cultural homogeneity and an emphasis on commonalities is reflected in the focus of key policy reports analysed below.

#### **4.4 The Policy reports, the research questions and Milton Keynes**

In order to understand the policy context for the development of multiculturally constituted communities within Milton Keynes it made sense to examine the key multicultural policy reports. These included the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (2000), the Cattle Reports (2001) and (2004) and the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007). The reports identified various challenges to and opportunities for increasing levels of integration and cohesion within a community, such as:

- Residential segregation
- Mono-cultural schools

'Multiculture, community and social inclusion in new city spaces'

- Poverty and deprivation
- Allocation of funding
- New housing developments
- Civic participation and cross-cultural contact.

The following sections outline in more detail the concerns mentioned above in relation to Milton Keynes and the five research questions of this studentship.

#### **4.4.1 Residential segregation**

Key policy reports on integration and cohesion identify residential segregation as one of the greatest barriers to facilitating multicultural exchange (interaction or communication between different cultural groups), since this is bound to decrease if an individual lives in a completely separate space from those culturally different, as was the case in Bradford and Burnley where Cattle (2001, 2004) observed communities living 'parallel lives'.

While entrenched residential segregation of minority ethnic groups does not currently exist in Milton Keynes city-wide, evidence suggests that many migrant groups are clustering in certain areas of the city (MK Social Atlas, 2007). Pakistanis tend to live in Wolverton; Bangladeshis in Bletchley; Zimbabweans in Shenley Church End and Two Mile Ash; Ghanaians, Somalis and other 'Black Africans' often concentrate in areas such as Central Milton Keynes, Conniburrow, Fishermead, Granby and Netherfield. However, Ghanaians are noticeably more dispersed across the city than Somalis; therefore one interesting aspect of the research project will be to investigate how and why this is the case.

It is understandable that newly arrived migrants wish to live close to each other; yet under certain circumstances these clusters can become problematic. For example, when they are the result of constraint; if they result in a lack of multicultural exchange; or if the areas where migrant groups settle have a negative impact on their quality of life (e.g. high crime rates, under-performing or oversubscribed schools, high unemployment etc).

Since it is clear that the majority of these concentrations take place in relatively deprived areas of Milton Keynes one important question for the project and the city is whether new migrants tend to live in these areas as a result of choice or constraint and how this affects levels of integration; multicultural exchange; community solidarity (both ethnic/religious and local) and quality of life. Ultimately the motivation should be to prevent the residential concentrations described above from evolving into the same polarised residential enclaves witnessed in other areas of increasing ethnic diversity characterised by communalism and little cross-cultural contact. This understanding may play an important role in encouraging a sense of belonging among migrant communities to a collective 'Milton Keynes community' as stated in research question 2 and is also clearly both a challenge and an opportunity presented to local government and formal and informal community structures (research question 3).



#### **4.4.2 Mono-cultural schools**

Schools are identified nationally by the reports as another barrier to multicultural exchange. Alongside the trend of increasing so-called 'parallel lives' there is also a trend in many areas of schools becoming mono-cultural (defined as where over 50% of students are from minority groups).

Since Milton Keynes has not experienced the entrenched residential segregation characteristic of long-established urban areas it is also yet to experience wholly mono-cultural schools. The Milton Keynes Schools Spring 2007 Census revealed that BME groups represent about 24.9% of pupils in Milton Keynes up from 22.9% in 2006. In most cases each locality in Milton Keynes has its own primary school while secondary schools tend to draw their student body from a much wider catchment area. This means that primary schools located in areas of minority ethnic concentration are likely to have above average numbers of BME pupils, while secondary schools in these areas will tend to have a more even distribution. Since the evidence suggests that Somalis are far more residentially concentrated than Ghanaians within the city it is expected that they will also be more heavily concentrated in a small number of schools. Numbers of minority ethnic pupils have been found to vary between schools across the city, although almost all schools have at least some pupils from minority ethnic communities. EMASS found 68 schools where minority ethnic pupils formed 25% or more of the school population and eight schools where minority ethnic pupils formed over 50% of the school population (EMASS, 2007). Informal discussions with the head of EMASS have pointed towards the interesting trend among some BME communities of preferring to send their children to catholic faith schools over their local school and some even sending their children out of Milton Keynes to attend private, faith, or single-sex schools.

With these statistics in mind this studentship will consider the role that schools (and also religious centres) play in facilitating or restricting multicultural exchange and community well-being (research question 3). It will do so by looking at, among other things, the prospect of mono-cultural schools developing in Milton Keynes, the national duty on schools to promote community cohesion and citizenship in the context of Milton Keynes and the effect of new migrant communities in Milton Keynes schools given the fact that in several wards across the city approximately 20% of pupils do not have English as a first language (Cochrane).

#### **4.4.3 Poverty and deprivation**

National reports concerned with multicultural policy tend to focus on areas characterised by deprivation and poverty and view these as two of the most significant factors affecting levels of cohesion and integration. Conventional conceptions of community cohesion presuppose the existence of deprivation and conflict within an area. Analysing multicultural community formation, cohesion and integration in a new city that has not experienced any significant inter-ethnic conflict and is not characterised by deprivation offers a new perspective of community cohesion. One that is concerned with more than just a superficial understanding and can reflect the needs for community cohesion in all types of areas (e.g. those

characterised by conflict and deprivation as well as those potentially characterised by high levels of avoidance and relative economic stability).

While pockets of intense poverty and deprivation are present within the city, Milton Keynes is characterised by growth and so is not the usual context for looking at multiculturally constituted communities. For instance, the average rate of employment in Milton Keynes is above the national average and is also above the floor target for black and minority ethnic people. The proportion of people in receipt of income support is also substantially lower in Milton Keynes than for England as a whole. Milton Keynes was ranked 212<sup>th</sup> out of 354 in terms of deprivation, with 1 being the most deprived, according to the index of deprivation (Cochrane, p1). However several areas within Milton Keynes such as Bletchley, Lakes Estate, Fishermead, Coffee Hall, Beanhill, Netherfield and Conniburrow can be legitimately described as pockets of deprivation. In fact approximately 9000 people live in the six most deprived 'super output areas' of Milton Keynes which are amongst the 10% most deprived nationally. A further 11,000 live in a further seven 'super output areas' among the 20% most deprived (Cochrane, p3-4; Milton Keynes Council 2008).

In light of these facts it is clear that to look at Milton Keynes through the same lens as other more longstanding multiculturally constituted urban areas would be inappropriate as the city as a whole is not characterised by deprivation but by growth. At the same time to ignore the often intense pockets of poverty and deprivation present within Milton Keynes would be to miss a unique opportunity. Gaining an evidence-based understanding of the link between cohesion and deprivation in new city spaces could unearth potential opportunities and challenges posed to Milton Keynes by its multiculturally constituted communities and go some way towards answering research question 1.

#### **4.4.4 Allocation of funding**

The allocation of funding within a community has been highlighted by multicultural policy reports as a particularly significant factor affecting levels of integration and cohesion in an area. They offer the advice that 'funding bodies should presume against separate funding for distinct communities and instead require collaborative working on a thematic basis such as literacy, capacity building, immigration advice etc' (Cantle, 2001, 2004 and COIC reports, 2007). This is because Single Group Funding (SGF) is believed to reinforce cultural differences between minority ethnic groups by forcing them to compete against each other for resources (Cantle, 2001:38).

However, there is some contradiction between key policy reports regarding when SGF is useful in supporting newly arrived communities to develop skills, maintain their cultural values and build capacity, and when it is counterproductive, divisive and detrimental to cohesion. This has resulted in confusion within local areas over whether to support 'bonding' activities such as the 'celebration of cultures' (which would inevitably involve some SGF); or those more focused on 'bridging' and 'collaborative working' across thematic areas such as 'tackling drugs, achievement through sports and arts programmes, and literacy and basic skills development – across all communities' (Cantle, 2001:27). In fact, the second Cantle report (2004)

acknowledged that while policy advocates that SGF be redirected to encourage cohesion in communities in the long term 'there is some evidence funders continue to fund these [SGF] projects for longer than necessary and that this can perpetuate segregation and isolation' (Cantle, 2004:50).

The funding referred to by these reports is typically regeneration funding as it presupposes that where there is a problem with cohesion or a need to address multiculturally constituted community formations, there is also a need for mass regeneration. Milton Keynes has received relatively little regeneration funding city-wide. Almost all regeneration funding in Milton Keynes has been spent in three areas. 'New Start for Netherfield' (2002/2003) - £1,337,000, a seven-year scheme seeking to transform Netherfield into a thriving, confident, community through training linked to local employment; a childcare facility; a programme of environmental enhancement and community safety to convert derelict garages into workshops and public spaces; and measures to bring disenfranchised people into mainstream social and economic activities. 'Wolverton Works and Symbiosis' (2002/2003) - £1,480,000, a seven-year bid focusing on enhancing the town's competitiveness. Key elements include: a partnership with Railcare and Milton Keynes College to create a centre of excellence for manufacturing training and business development; Town centre revitalisation, including closed circuit television, improved pedestrian and public transport links; Cultural regeneration involving the Pakistani community, and provision of a local childcare facility. 'Spotlight on Bletchley' (2005/2006) - £1,751,000, a 7-year project to build capacity, halt decline and to provide the foundations for a thriving, confident and sustainable social, economic and business community. The programme contains a number of initiatives which aim to involve and empower local people, develop innovative community enterprise and secure investment in the area. Others will work with disaffected young people to improve their life skills and levels of achievement (SEERA). Also, in 2005-06 £200,000 was allocated to fund services for rough sleepers and single homeless people and an additional grant of £200,000 for 2006-07 (GOER).

Yet there is some financial support provided to communities, most notably through the MK Community Foundation. Therefore the issues of funding discussed above clearly impact greatly upon issues of cohesion and integration within the city and must be considered carefully and form the basis of a clear and sustainable city-wide strategy for the engagement and settlement of new groups and citizens. Managing the distribution of funding and getting the balance right between 'bonding' and 'bridging' activities will be a key challenge for Milton Keynes Council on the road to achieving a cohesive and integrated community.

#### **4.4.5 New housing developments**

Housing is frequently mentioned by policy reports as a point of contention in cities experiencing high rates of in-migration as there is often a shortage which can lead to settled communities viewing migrants as an unwelcome and added strain on resources that are receiving preferential treatment.

Being a new city and placed as it is on the edge of the South East of England, Milton Keynes is constantly expanding and building new housing developments. Local housing assessments have shown that Milton Keynes will require 4,196 new homes

to be built each year if it is to keep pace with the needs of its population (Milton Keynes Council, 2008). By interspersing one to two bedroom flats with three to six bedroom houses, mixed type and tenure housing developments such as Broughton, Middleton, Ashland, Oxley Park, Grange Farm, Bletchley Park and Tattenhoe intend to transcend areas characterised by single occupancy, low economic status and instability.

The effect of these new developments on the wider population of Milton Keynes will be considered as part of research question 3 which asks how particular loci work to create 'community-ness', despite the persistence of tensions and rumours between settled and migrant groups' and council housing remaining limited. Every new housing development built in Milton Keynes represents an opportunity for lived forms of integration, community cohesion and multicultural exchange. Therefore, it will be particularly interesting to discover the effect of new housing developments on the case study groups as the evidence suggests that Ghanaians may live in these new areas more than Somalis.

#### **4.4.6 Civic participation and cross-cultural contact**

The role of community and social capital is at the centre of this research project and is much commented on in policy reports. One of the key recommendations of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (COIC) was for a set of shared common values which guide the way people treat and expect to be treated by each other, such as neighbourliness, civility, tolerance, freedom and equality (COIC, 2007:66; Parekh, 2000:53-54). This set of values is hoped to lead to a reassertion of British (or English, Scottish, Welsh) national identities, celebrated through citizenship ceremonies for new migrants and young people, citizenship education as part of the national curriculum and 'national days' which claim to 'create a respect for the traditions and heritage of all citizens' (Cantle, 2004:8). The belief is that despite a vast range of identities and affiliations there is more that binds individuals in a society than divides them and by focusing on shared common values segregation, ignorance and so-called 'parallel lives' will become less common (Cantle, 2001:9).

The COIC also placed great emphasis on the role of local areas on their own levels of integration and cohesion, including local government, local community organisations and local people themselves. A reassertion of strong local identities and a celebration of 'community days' were also championed as best practise in encouraging multicultural exchange, integration and cohesion among a local population. While 'bridging' activities like local or national days and celebrating other cultures do inform citizens about other cultures to a certain degree the activities can be largely superficial and involve little meaningful cross-cultural dialogue. Understandings of cultures are often tokenistic, essentialist and uncritical, treating minority groups as homogenous blocks instead of free-thinking individuals.

---

<sup>1</sup> Milton Keynes Citizen, 'Housing claims a myth says council', 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2004, <http://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/news/Housing-claims-a-myth-says-826821.jp>, accessed 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007; Milton Keynes Citizen, 'Special support for homeless Somalis', 8<sup>th</sup> August 2006, <http://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/news/Special-support-for-homeless-Somalis-1679198.jp>, accessed 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

In light of the above it is worth discovering the impact of local and national identities and concepts of social citizenship on migrant groups in Milton Keynes as well as evaluating the effect of emphasising shared values and interests on rates of cross-cultural contact. Clearly living alongside those of a different culture does not necessarily lead to meaningful contact and dialogue. So while one would not expect Cantle's (2001, 2004) 'parallel lives' diagnosis in Milton Keynes it is possible that 'bonding' activities designed to support migrant groups in capacity building and the preservation of cultural and religious practices have had the unintended effect of limiting multicultural exchange within the city. Therefore it is crucial that this studentship seek to discover how formal and informal capacity within the two migrant communities is mobilised to develop a sense of belonging to Milton Keynes as well as the extent to which different migrant groups engage meaningfully with each other and with the wider Milton Keynes population (research questions 2 and 3).

## **5. Year Two - Moving the project forward**

By this point I will have developed a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical, policy and local contexts surrounding my studentship. I will undertake training in quantitative methods as part of my ongoing skills development and also continue to expand my knowledge of the relevant academic theory and key local policy. The aim of Year Two will be to combine all these understandings with the background knowledge gained from the networking mentioned earlier and apply them to the context of Milton Keynes through multi-method, qualitative primary research.

### **5.1 Semi-structured interviews**

Following the agreed fieldwork design of the research project in Year Two I will be conducting a series of **semi-structured interviews** with various key agencies and figures throughout the city. People such as Sean McDermott, Roz Mascarenhas and Lisa Lovell of the Milton Keynes Council Youth Participation Team as well as the Milton Keynes Youth Forum and Milton Keynes Youth Council will be approached as each of these will offer a chance to understand the experiences of and provisions for young people as well as how they are engaged with in Milton Keynes. Interviews with those individuals responsible for institutions at the heart of local communities such as Head teachers, home-school liaison officers, religious leaders as well as the Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Service (EMASS) will help me to understand the role that schools and religious centres play in facilitating or restricting multicultural exchange and community well-being (research question 3).

Interviews will be sought with Navrita Atwal the Director of the Milton Keynes Racial Equality Council and Maryam Karim the Community Development Officer for Black and Minority Ethnic Communities will give the project a firm historical understanding of minority ethnic community formation as well as interesting insights into minority ethnic community social capital, structures and the opportunities they offer local government and their local communities.

The opportunity to speak to key members of the Milton Keynes Local Strategic Partnership will offer a detailed understanding of the vision for the city and its policy approaches to issues of multicultural, community cohesion, integration and social inclusion.

Finally I envisage that key figures from social organisations at the centre of the migrant populations themselves such as the Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes, the East African Association Milton Keynes, Milton Keynes Somali Community Association, Somali Community Council and Milton Keynes Muslim Association (MKMA) will provide insight into the lived experiences of members of the case study groups, particularly levels of social capital and how they differ between each group and why.

### **5.2 Focus groups**

In order to gain a deeper understanding of notions of attachment, belonging and inclusion I will also set up a selection of up to six **focus groups** which would be conducted with members of these social organisations and with a snowball sample of

local Ghanaian and Somali residents in the city. A selection of focus groups with Ghanaian and Somali young people will offer a first-hand understanding of young people's experiences and opinions of Milton Keynes.

### **5.3 Participant observation**

There will also be some **participant observation** at key Council, local and migratory formal and informal community events in order to witness first-hand how migrant communities as well as the wider 'Milton Keynes community' organise and are formed.

### **5.4 Research ethics**

All of these methods will involve me in working directly with people, which means that it will be important for me to be as transparent and open with them as possible. I will prepare a proposal to be considered through the Open University's Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee. In order to ensure my project is in-line with ethical standards I will ensure that all of my participants undertake a process of informed consent whereby they are aware of how the data will be used and will be offered anonymity wherever possible. However, it is noted at this stage that there may be instances where complete anonymity may not be possible due to the profile of roles in certain organisations.

## **6. Conclusion**

Three years of critical analysis of academic theory as well as national and local public policy, combined with the primary research of semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observation mentioned above will ultimately lead to the production of a PhD thesis of approximately 100,000 words. Therefore, the final year will consist mainly of a process of writing up my research findings for the thesis, while Milton Keynes Council will also be kept up to date throughout via annual interim reports and presentations alongside ongoing consultation with relevant council figures.



## 7. References

- Cantle (2001) 'Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team'. London: Home Office.
- Cantle (2004) 'The End of Parallel Lives? The Report of the Community Cohesion Panel'.
- Cochrane, A. (2008) Poverty in Milton Keynes, Unpublished Draft.
- Commission on Integration and Cohesion (COIC) (2007) 'Our Shared Futures', Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).
- Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (CMEB) (2000) *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*, London: Profile Books.
- Gilroy, P. (2004) *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* Abingdon: Routledge.
- Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMASS) (2007) *Equality & Diversity in Milton Keynes*, Milton Keynes Council.
- Government Office for the English Regions (GOER)  
<http://www.gos.gov.uk/facts/factgose/miltonkeynes/>, accessed 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007.
- Milton Keynes Council (2008) 'Milton Keynes – The Local Story of Place'.
- Milton Keynes Council (2003) *Census Data on Equalities*, <http://www.MiltonKeynesweb.co.uk/statistics>.
- Milton Keynes Social Atlas (2007),  
<http://www.mkiobservatory.org.uk/document.aspx?id=7775&siteID=1026>, accessed 8<sup>th</sup> May 2008.
- Modood, T. (2007) *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Parekh, B. (2000) *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*, London: Runnymede Trust.
- South East England Development Agency's (SEEDA) Achievements for: Delivering Sustainable Communities - Physical Environments 1999-2003.
- South East England's Regional Assembly (SEERA) (2002) SEEDA's Impact in Areas of Economic Success, [http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/meetings/select/areas\\_econ\\_success/220302/annex\\_3\\_to\\_agenda\\_item\\_4.doc](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/meetings/select/areas_econ_success/220302/annex_3_to_agenda_item_4.doc).
- Street Dreams (2006) 'Round Ere, oo Cares!!' – A project for Bletchley Task Force, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire.

## **Appendix H:**

# **Research Presentation Event**

---

## MULTICULTURE, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN NEW CITY SPACES

### AN ESRC CASE COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PRESENTATION EVENT

WEDNESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2010

MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES

#### Panel

- Allan Cochrane, Professor of Urban Studies, The Open University
- Jamie Kesten, PhD Candidate, The Open University
- Giles Mohan, Reader in the Politics of International Development, The Open University
- Sarah Neal, Senior Lecturer in Social Policy, The Open University
- Jeremy Beake, Corporate Equalities & Diversity Manager, Milton Keynes Council
- Julie Rankin, Assistant Director Policy & Improvement, Milton Keynes Council

#### Agenda

- 13:45 - 14:00 **Meet and greet over coffee/tea**  
All
- 14:00 - 14:20 **Welcome, Introductions and ESRC CASE Research Project Overview**  
Giles Mohan, The Open University
- 14:20 - 15:00 **Key Research Findings Feedback + Q & A**  
Jamie Kesten, The Open University
- 15:00 - 15:40 **Milton Keynes Council Cohesion Plan Outline + Q & A**  
Jeremy Beake, Corporate Equalities and Diversity Manager, Milton Keynes Council
- 15:40 - 16:00 **Closing Comments**  
Sarah Neal, The Open University

RSVP - *If you would like to attend this event or have any questions please contact:*

Jamie Kesten

Faculty of Social Sciences, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA.

T: + 44 (0) 1908 654410

M: + 44 (0) 7720 290878

E: [j.kestn@open.ac.uk](mailto:j.kestn@open.ac.uk)

W: [http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/about-the-faculty/departments/geography/postgraduate/profiles/jamie\\_kestn.php](http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/about-the-faculty/departments/geography/postgraduate/profiles/jamie_kestn.php)



# Multiculture, community and social inclusion in new city spaces

A collaborative ESRC CASE research presentation event on behalf of:

The Open University and Milton Keynes Council

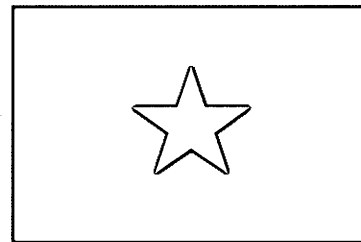
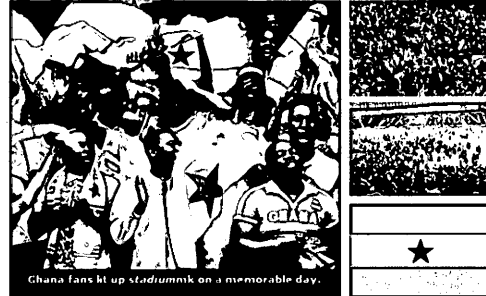


## Introduction

- Highlights initial and emergent findings around the settlement of two 'Black African' groups in MK
- Demonstrates how standard models of 'community cohesion' can be problematic within new urban spaces
- Explains how Ghanaian and Somali young people are actively negotiating dual processes of mixing and non-mixing in their everyday lives
- Argues for an appreciation of the complexities of each 'community' within policy discourse
- Acknowledges some of the challenges, tensions and ambiguities in making multicultural policy-making within new urban spaces

## Methodology

- **Who did I speak to?**
  - Policy-makers and practitioners
  - Educationalists
  - Community and religious leaders
  - Voluntary sector organisations
  - Young people
- **What approach did I take?**
  - Qualitative, ethnographic approach
- **What methods did I use?**
  - Document analysis
  - Participant observation
  - Semi-structured interviews
  - Focus groups



## Why was MK a good case study site?

- Little research into multicultural outside large urban centres.
- Challenges assumption of high levels of residential and educational segregation and high degrees of deprivation since MK is:
  - Increasingly multiculturally constituted, yet
  - Experiencing relatively little entrenched segregation
  - Experiencing rapid and constant population growth
- A local authority making steps towards acknowledging and managing its diverse and growing population
- Offers another understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by multiculturally constituted communities, by looking at them in a different 'new city' context

## The multi-ethnic population of MK

- MK Schools Census, Spring 2010

- BME groups represent 31.0% of pupils in 2010, compared with 20.7% in 2005.
- 26.7% of secondary school pupils, and 33.2% of primary school pupils, and 28.9% of sixth form students come from BME groups.
- The 'Black African' group is the largest minority ethnic group accounting for 7.8% of all pupils.

Ethnic Group	2010	
	Pupils	%
White British	26,109	66.3
White Irish	161	0.4
White Other	1,680	4.3
Mixed	2,134	5.4
Indian	979	2.5
Pakistani	1,044	2.6
Bangladeshi	587	1.5
Any Other Asian	854	2.2
Black African	3,089	7.8
Black Caribbean	353	0.9
Black Other	576	1.5
Chinese	276	0.7
Any Other Group	493	1.3
Refuse/Unknown	1,067	2.7
<b>Total Pupils</b>	<b>39,402</b>	<b>100</b>

## Somalis and Ghanaians in MK

- Why were these two groups originally chosen?

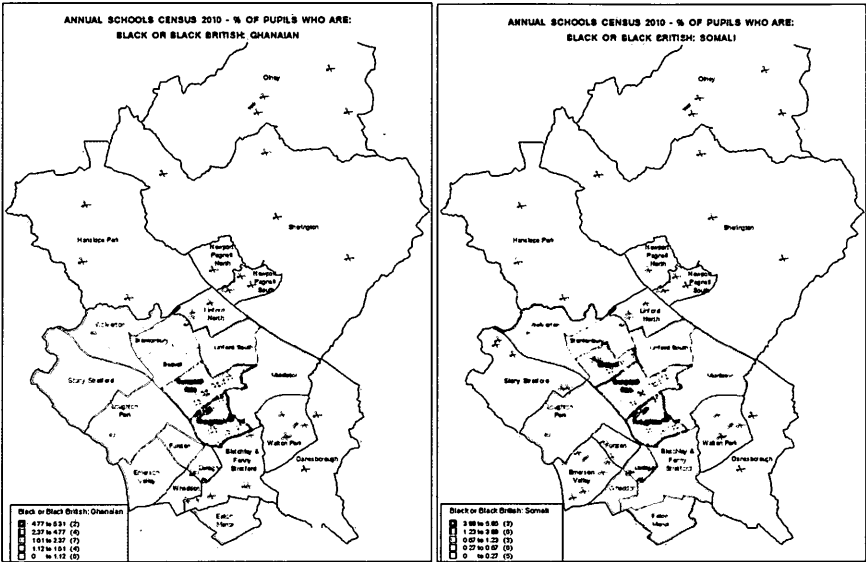
- 'Black African' population constituted the second largest BME population in the city
- Expected to provide useful contrasts to each other to unpick and understand the category of 'Black African'.

- Initial expectations of the case-study groups:

	Ghanaians	Somalis
Length of time in MK	Long-established	Recently arrived
Route of migration	Secondary migration from London	Arriving in MK seeking asylum
Economic position	Relatively secure professionals	Predominantly low-skilled work
Geographic distribution	No significant concentrations	Concentrated in the central estates
Community Capacity	Well-connected through a range of formal and informal associations	Less connected and well-organised

Sources: Henry and Mohan 2003, Mohan 2006; Sporton and Valentine, 2007; Sporton, Valentine and Nielsen, 2006

# Somalis and Ghanaians in MK: Residential patterns



## Research Findings

Indicative and emergent at this stage...

## Living apart/together: from 'parallel lives' to 'ambivalent relations'

- **Community cohesion discourse based on notion of polarised communities leading 'parallel-lives'**

- "Separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks, means that many communities operate on the basis of a series of parallel lives. These lives often do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap and promote any meaningful interchanges." (Cantle, 2001: 9)

- **MK evidence pointing towards more 'ambivalent social relations'**

- "I think the multi-cultural whole concept is that yeah we're living in harmony next to each other but actually we're not mixing too much, or we have an understanding, we're not against each other but everyone partakes of what they know, what they've brought back from their various countries or various cultures... I suppose the good thing about Milton Keynes is that we're not against each other, in terms of the cultural groups, so you can actually go taste all other cultures and foods and societies"

Ghanaian Pastor

## Living apart/together: 'everyday' mixing and the 'duality' of interaction

- **Mixing as a part of everyday life**

- "...everybody has like a Jamaican friend, a Nigerian friend, a Somali friend. Everybody mixes with each other"

Young person of Ghanaian origin

- "...yeah, because people are just mixed and all that. Just say one Somali, one Ghanaian and one Chinese they are all hanging around together..."

Young person of Somali origin

- **The 'duality' of social interaction**

- "where I hang out it's mostly black people, but where I go to school it's mostly white people, so it's like 50/50 if you know what I mean?"

Young person of Somali origin

- "I guess most of our British friends are from school, so if we are seeing our British friends on the weekday then obviously you are gonna wanna hang with your African friends on the weekend".

Young person of Ghanaian origin



## Living apart/together: common culture and shared interests

- **Common culture**

- "I think that is the reason why future generations won't be more mixed because it's like some people from Ghana would come here, say a boy my age has come here with his family just now, and his family would be saying to him, oh you can only marry a black Ghanaian girl, but like say I wanted to marry a white girl, I don't think my dad would really be that fast to stop me."

Young person of Ghanaian origin

- **Shared interests**

- "... The football things by MKMA were not just Somalis they were for all Muslims. I think it's a lot of mix because Muslims it's not just one nationality it's like all over the world... So you get to meet a lot of different people"

Young person of Somali origin

## Living apart/together: perceptions of, and approaches to, 'non-mixing'

- "... the interaction, that getting out of their comfort zone and you know coming and mixing with other young people, that's what you tend not to see a lot, you know if you go to most of these youth clubs, even though you have Somalis in that group, if it is not something, you know, 'exclusively for them' you don't tend to see them around as such... I think that is a specific example linked to the Somali group... you know it might be religious or cultural, but they don't tend to mix, for their women, it's a no-no..."

Practitioner

- "We're running a weekly Youth Club... so it's about raising their confidence because they are fairly isolated and they hang around themselves only, so we give them opportunity to build their self-esteem, try to offer them to go to the other agency where they can integrate with the wider community".

Somali Community Activist

- my teacher at the time when I arrived just shoved me in with the black people, which I, at the time, was just like 'OK – I know it seems like I want to hang around with black people' and she just shoved me with them like 'that's your people, just get on with it'... So coming from a predominantly black background and then having my really close friends, actually most of them, being white and them influencing me hugely..."

Young Person of Ghanaian origin

## Living apart/together: assumptions and oversimplifications of communities

- "Within the past four years there has been a rapid increase in the numbers of children to our school and they have largely come via the European route... via Germany and Holland, so we have 23 languages spoken in our school. A large percentage of our children are Ghanaian. Those Ghanaian children speak maybe German or Dutch and maybe Twi which is their own language and we have a high percentage of children who came to the school with no English at all"

Educationalist

- "...Like people look at me and think that because I can't speak Ghanaian and loads of other people could, they saw me as less authentic, but it doesn't make me, being Dutch as well, it doesn't make me less Ghanaian than you, its really silly to think that..."

Young person of Ghanaian and Dutch origin

## Living apart/together: urban design reinforcing living patterns

- "...within the neighbourhood that we live in there isn't much of a community sense you know, where I live ...we don't even have a shop, a shopping centre or anything like that so there's nothing that brings us together you know we don't see each other... so we've become kind of like you know we just come into the house where we live in and that's it so there is no connection with the local people let alone the ones who are isolated somewhere else".

Somali Community Activist

- "...I think every estate should have like a community centre where you get together, that would be better and it would keep kids off the streets".

Young Person of Somali origin

## Living apart/together: urban design causing division?

- "...if they don't invest in the transport communities will become more and more isolated... creating ghettos, it's not difficult in Milton Keynes... It is one place where it can be easily done, because things are so far away, transport, houses, shops, so people just tend to live in their own little vicinity, and its even happening in the Lakes Estate... people on the Lakes Estate don't want to go into Bletchley, although Bletchley is only 20 minutes walk from the Lakes."

Practitioner

- "It's like a border isn't it, its like a natural border. The danger is that you have a poor area and a rich area on the other side and you just let the poorer areas decline, this is what they say about the 'two-speed city'. This is something you would probably have to mention, that the cruddier areas, the ones that need a bit of investment, their not getting it, its all the new spanking areas that are getting it, right across the road."

Policy-maker

## Multicultural policy-making: challenge of urban design

- "...people are very entrenched on their grid squares. I know we as an authority and other public sector organisations in the third sector want to break those barriers down, but actually they're almost natural, geographic boundaries and I don't quite understand, I think its probably the best way that how we're going to achieve that... those sorts of clusters are normal how are we supposed to break those barriers down? Especially when you have all the facilities on one estate, so you have the local shop, you have the school, you have a community meeting place, actually it clusters in rather than spreads it out. I'd be happy to find out how we can break those barriers down, but I think we're setting ourselves up to fail if we continue with it."

Policy-maker

- "...if you look at it, it's only the city centre that you can guarantee to see every ethnic minority, or every you know, culture or group of you know people converge and come together as one... so I think certainly the layout or you know the structure of how the place is, has an effect on how people, you know see themselves as a community".

Practitioner

## Multicultural policy-making: challenge of community engagement

- “its always a problem because the people that shout loudest tend to get heard. If you look at the way that council or police services run it tends to be skewed towards the people that make the most noise to a degree. Actually getting at those that really don't have a voice is much more difficult...”

Policy-maker

- “...the population changes here quite rapidly so you don't really have a mass of people who have established themselves and organised themselves that you need to respond to, you don't have that here.”

Policy-maker

## Multicultural policy-making: tensions and ambiguities

- **Tensions in managing policy shifts**

- “It doesn't create cohesion, prevent, its actually quite a dangerous thing... its not the way that you promote cohesion. You can't have a cohesion strategy with no resources behind it and have a Prevent strategy with loads of money which is only geared to one community...”

Policy-maker

- **Ambiguities around community cohesion agenda**

- “... I'm never quite sure what community cohesion means, um is it about a community being able to relate to one another, you know various elements in the community while retaining a separate identity or is it about identities merging? And um, if people preserve separate identities as part of the cohesion agenda there is always room for clash, for em for difference of opinion. In a way a healthy community is one where those differences of opinion can exist but they can be resolved by peaceful means.

Policy-maker

## Conclusion

- MK represents a multiethnic new city with pockets of deprivation in a context of overall growth. Therefore understanding problems of cohesion in terms of deprivation may be inadequate.
- Assumptions about multicultural spaces inform the types of solutions and approaches to issues of cohesion, inequality and integration. New (multicultural) city spaces offer the possibility for new approaches to and understandings of these issues.
- Rigid notions of 'communities' are often misleading and fail to represent the range of socio-economic and migratory experiences which exist.
- Initial evidence points towards ambivalent social relations and the presence of everyday lived forms of social mixing and multiculturalism

**Thank you for your attention**

**Any questions?**

**j.kesten@open.ac.uk**

- Special thanks to MKi Observatory and the Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Support Service (EMASS) for supplying the data and maps for this presentation.

# Appendix I: Research Presentation Event Feedback Forms

---

# MULTICULTURE, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN NEW CITY SPACES

## ESRC CASE COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PRESENTATION EVENT FEEDBACK FORM

What did you think about the overall quality of the presentation given by the student? Was it well-presented, clear, and easy to understand?	
What did you enjoy most about the student's presentation?	
Was there anything that you felt should have been included in the student's presentation that wasn't mentioned?	
Did you have any further questions about the research which you would like to ask?	
Are there any ways you think the event could have been improved?	

**Jamie Kesten**  
 Faculty of Social Sciences, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA.  
 T: + 44 (0) 1908 654410  
 M: + 44 (0) 7720 290878  
 E: [j.kestcn@open.ac.uk](mailto:j.kestcn@open.ac.uk)  
 W: [http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/about-the-faculty/departments/geography/postgraduate/profiles/jamie\\_kestcn.php](http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/about-the-faculty/departments/geography/postgraduate/profiles/jamie_kestcn.php)



# Appendix J: HPMEC Proposal

---



## HUMAN PARTICIPANTS AND MATERIALS ETHICS COMMITTEE (HPMEC) PROFORMA

Please complete and send to:

**John Oates** ([j.m.oates@open.ac.uk](mailto:j.m.oates@open.ac.uk)), Chair,  
Human Participants Materials Ethics Committee (HPMEC)  
Centre for Childhood Development and Learning (CHDL),  
Briggs, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes  
Also send a copy to [Research-ethics@open.ac.uk](mailto:Research-ethics@open.ac.uk)

If you have any queries before you fill in this form please look at the  
Research Ethics (intranet) web site: <http://intranet.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/>

### Title of project

A short, descriptive title.

Multiculture, community and social inclusion in new city spaces

### Schedule

Time frame for the research and its data collection phase(s).

The planned research will be conducted as part of a full time PhD (start date 1<sup>st</sup> October 2007, expected completion 30th September 2010).

The first year of research (2007-2008) concentrated on analysing secondary data in the form of academic and policy literature on the subjects of multicultural and cohesion, developing general research skills and establishing a good working relationship with the CASE partner organisation. In addition, significant time was spent attending council, local and migratory community events networking and establishing initial contacts with key figures from the local policy arena, migrant groups and those involved in the provision of services to young people. A series of short meetings was held with relevant figures from Milton Keynes Council to understand key roles, introduce the project, explain its goals and answer any questions. These meetings increased awareness of the project among policy makers, built good working relationships with influential figures within the city and provided vital knowledge of the local context, informing the primary research to be conducted in the second year.

The second year of research (2008-2009) will concentrate on identifying potential interview participants and conducting semi structured interviews with figures from agencies such as the MK Council Youth Participation Team, the MK Youth Forum, Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Support Service and the Milton Keynes Local Strategic Partnership. Also, figures from the social organisations at the centre of the migrant populations the Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes, the East African Association, MK Somali Community Association, Somali Community Council, and MK Muslim Association. A series of up to six focus group interviews will be conducted with members of these social organisations with a snowball sample of local Ghanaian and Somali residents in the city (particularly young people). Participant observation will also be conducted

throughout the year at key Council, local and migratory formal and informal community events. Finally there is the transcription, organisation and analysis of all the data collected accompanied by an in depth examination of the local context.

The third year (2009-2010) will concentrate on focussing the analysis, deepening understanding and writing up the research findings.

#### **Abstract**

A summary of the main points of the research, understandable by a non-specialist.

This research aims to investigate the ways in which multiculturally constituted communities become established in new urban spaces, considering the ways in which it might be possible to develop forms of inclusive growth, rather than looking for ways of more positively managing decline or fostering regeneration.

The project seeks to both identify opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of multicultural community cohesion initiatives within Milton Keynes and explore how it might serve as a case study exemplar for policy interventions in other places with long as well as short multicultural histories.

The study will draw on the experience of two recently settled Black African migrant populations in the city (Ghanaian and Somali) and will examine the differences and difficulties, commonalities and successes in the two processes of inclusion, particularly focusing on the role of schools and provision for young people and on religious centres.

#### **Source(s) of funding**

Details of the external or internal funding body (e.g. ESRC, MRC).

ESRC CASE Studentship (ESRC & Milton Keynes Council)

#### **Justification for research**

What contribution to knowledge, policy, practice, and people's lives the research will make?

The overall intended outcome for this research is to offer an insight into how multicultural is lived within new city spaces such as Milton Keynes.

New city spaces are understudied in relation to issues of multicultural and so this study is important because it offers researchers and policy makers a different perspective on the challenges and opportunities presented by multiculturally constituted communities. National policy reports assume that all multicultural areas experience high levels of residential and educational segregation, high degrees of poverty and deprivation and low rates of contact between culturally distinct individuals and groups. Milton Keynes challenges this as it is shown to be significantly multicultural yet it experiences little entrenched residential and educational segregation, only pockets of deprivation surrounded by overall growth and is not characterised by culturally isolated communities. The assumptions about multicultural spaces inform the types of solutions and approaches to issues of cohesion, inequality and integration. Therefore, recognising that multicultural can occur in areas of social integration and economic growth offers the possibility of an enhanced understanding and new approaches to these issues.

Due to the detailed understanding of MK Council processes, strategic agency approaches, national policy foci and migrant experiences, the theses will be well equipped to identify opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of multicultural community cohesion initiatives within Milton Keynes and explore how it might serve as a case study exemplar for policy interventions in other places with long as well as short multicultural histories. The increased effectiveness of these initiatives resulting from the project will therefore benefit both local and national policy in these areas and subsequently the lives of those living in multiculturally constituted communities.

#### **Investigators**

Give names and units of all persons involved in the collection and handling of individual data. Please name one person as Principal Investigator (PI).

Jamie Kesten (PhD Student and Principal Investigator)  
Professor Allan Cochrane (PhD Supervisor)  
Dr Giles Mohan (PhD Supervisor)  
Dr Sarah Neal (PhD Supervisor)

#### **Published ethical guidelines to be followed**

For example: BERA, BPS, BSA (see Research Ethics web site for more information).

Open University Ethical Principles for Research Involving Human Participants  
Open University Code of Practice for Research and those Conducting Research  
ESRC Research Ethics Framework  
British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Practice

#### **Location(s) of data collection**

Give details of where and when data will be collected. If on private, corporate or institutional premises, indicate what approvals are gained/required.

Milton Keynes is a large new town located on the edge of the South East of England, about 45 miles north-west of London. Milton Keynes is growing rapidly and has attracted people from a very wide range of backgrounds, which has resulted in a complex and rich cultural mix. Most of the minority ethnic communities are dispersed in the city but there are also some concentrations of specific communities in parts of the city which score highly on deprivation indices. The 'Black African' population of Milton Keynes is now the second largest BME population in the city having increased five-fold from just 0.3% in 1991 to 1.3% in 2003 (well above the national average of 0.95%) (Milton Keynes Council, 2003). This trend looks set to continue as the Milton Keynes Schools Spring Census 2007 revealed that 'Black Africans' now constitute 5.7% of the city's pupils, up from 4.8% the previous year (EMASS, 2007).

The semi-structured interviews are envisaged to take place at a variety of locations across

the city including schools, churches, mosques, community centres, and the council offices and while no approval requirements are anticipated they will be sought where necessary. In the case of interviews with young people under the age of 16 the researcher will ensure that consent is given by both the young person involved and the parent and that there will be a responsible adult present to supervise.

#### **Participants**

Give details of the population from which you will be sampling and how this sampling will be done.

As a result of the variety of different types of people this project seeks to engage with it is necessary for more than one type of sampling to be utilised.

Firstly, when selecting participants from the council and strategic bodies within the city individuals will be targeted on the basis of the relevance of their roles to the project. The intention is to achieve a suitable blend of experienced decision makers responsible for organisational and departmental approaches and those involved in direct service delivery.

Secondly, when selecting participants from the migrant social organisations it will once again be imperative that I identify and speak to their respective leaders but also that I cast my net more widely to the members of these social organisations via internal snowball sampling. When approaching members of the social organisations the researcher is aware that gatekeepers may play a significant role in encouraging the participation of other members and so efforts will be made to approach these individuals in advance and offer clear explanations of the research goals and focus.

The researcher is also aware that not all members of the migrant groups will be members of the social organisations and that there may exist some division between those that are and are not members. Therefore the researcher will not rely solely upon social organisations for research participants and will utilise other means of contact such as personal contacts, religious organisations and other social activities to operate a wider snowball sample of other Ghanaian and Somali residents within the city. Where the project seeks to speak to groups of young people aged 14-19 parental consent as well as the agreement of the school, religious or social organisation the sample was taken from will be sought prior to any research being conducted.

#### **Recruitment procedures**

How will you identify and approach potential participants?

Since the researcher is from Milton Keynes and very active within the local community in terms of provision of services for young people (Basketball Coach) and possesses extensive contacts within the respective migrant communities, access to research participants will initially be negotiated via these avenues, the initial short series of meetings with key figures within the city during the first year of research should help in negotiating access to research participants in the second year.

The researcher will be working closely with local schools in key areas of interest which will lead to semi-structured interviews with Head teachers and also assist in identifying and approaching potential participants for the focus groups to be held with young people.

The collaborative nature of this project has meant that the researcher has been based at the Saxon Court offices of Milton Keynes Council one day a week for the duration of the first year of research allowing for strong working relationships to develop which will aid the process of identifying and approaching potential participants.

#### **Consent**

Give details of how informed consent will be gained and attach copies of information sheet(s) and consent form(s). Give details of how participants can withdraw consent and what will happen to their data in such a case (see the Research Ethics web site for an advisory document).

Informed consent will operate as an ongoing process throughout the project before, during and after the collection of data. This will start with the consent of the organisations themselves. By virtue of becoming a CASE partner for the project Milton Keynes Council as an organisation has given their consent for the project to take place. Other organisations from which consent will be sought include Milton Keynes Racial Equality Council, Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes, Milton Keynes Somali Community Council and Milton Keynes Muslim Association as well as any religious organisations or youth groups that agree to participate. Consent will also be sought from the individual participants themselves. It is worth noting at this stage that the researcher recognises his responsibility to remain open and forthright about his role as a researcher during both formal and informal interactions in the field throughout the course of the research.

In accordance with standard UK practise detailed information on the research activities proposed will be sent out to all participants including; full disclosure of the research aims, the types of data to be collected, the method of data collection, a statement of confidentiality and data protection, the required time commitment, the right to withdraw, the right to have data destroyed, information concerning possible risks and the contact details of both the researcher and supervisors to be used along with a consent form for signature. Since many of the participants are likely to be young people between the ages of 14-19 and therefore considered vulnerable, obtaining parental consent will be crucial to gaining informed consent.

Feedback will be given to research participants at appropriate times following field research and in the concluding months of thesis preparation to ensure that participants remain informed of research findings and that accuracy of research data is maintained throughout the research process. Also, as the project is a CASE studentship interim reports are produced at the end of each academic year and circulated among relevant council figures.

#### **Methodology**

Outline the method(s) that will be employed to collect and analyse data.

A multi-method qualitative approach is the most appropriate to effectively address the research questions posed by this project. In order to illuminate policy making agendas on multicultural and community building a series of **semi-structured interviews** will be conducted with various key agencies and figures throughout the city. The Milton Keynes

Council Youth Participation Team as well as the Milton Keynes Youth Forum and Milton Keynes Youth Council will be approached as each of these will offer a chance to understand the experiences of and provisions for young people as well as how they are engaged with in Milton Keynes. Interviews with those individuals responsible for institutions at the heart of local communities such as Head teachers, home-school liaison officers, religious leaders as well as the Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Service (EMASS) will help the researcher to understand the role that schools and religious centres play in facilitating or restricting multicultural exchange and community well-being (research question 3).

Interviews will be sought with the Director of the Milton Keynes Racial Equality Council and the Community Development Officer for Black and Minority Ethnic Communities at Milton Keynes Council to give the project a firm historical understanding of minority ethnic community formation as well as interesting insights into minority ethnic community social capital, structures and the opportunities they offer local government and their local communities.

The opportunity to speak to the Milton Keynes Council Cohesion Officer as well as key members of the Milton Keynes Local Strategic Partnership will offer a detailed understanding of the vision for the city and its policy approaches to issues of multiculturalism, community cohesion, integration and social inclusion.

It is envisaged that key figures from social organisations at the centre of the migrant populations themselves such as the Association of Ghanaians in Milton Keynes, the East African Association Milton Keynes, Milton Keynes Somali Community Association, Somali Community Council and Milton Keynes Muslim Association (MKMA) will provide insight into the lived experiences of members of the case study groups, particularly levels of social capital and how they differ between each group and why.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of notions of attachment, belonging and inclusion a selection of up to six **focus groups** will be set up which would be conducted with members of these social organisations and with a snowball sample of local Ghanaian and Somali residents in the city. A selection of focus groups with Ghanaian and Somali young people aged 14-19 will offer a first-hand understanding of young people's experiences and opinions of Milton Keynes. The focus group interview was chosen as it was thought to be more conducive to free-flowing discussion and the establishment of a detailed understanding of the experiences of migrants and young people as participants will be able to reflect on the responses of others and assert their own experiences. Vital to the success of these focus groups will be the researcher's ability to mediate the discussion and ensure that all participants are able to have their say and that the discussion is not monopolised by a select few.

The semi-structured and focus group interviews will be complemented by 'moments' of **participant observation** at key Council, local and migratory formal and informal community events, in order to witness first-hand how migrant communities as well as the wider 'Milton Keynes community' organise and are formed. These observations would yield particular insights into structures of community feeling and the extent to which inclusionary practices were present in everyday formal and informal settings.

### **Data Protection**

Give details of registration of the project under the DP Act and the procedures to be followed re: storage and disposal of data to comply with the Act.

Registration of the project will comply with Open University requirements.

The protection of data is recognised as crucial to maintaining the trust and confidence of my participants and as such all information recorded will be coded to protect the identity of the research participants. These codes will contain the minimum amount of information necessary to validate the research and serve as an aid to memory for the researcher. It is anticipated that this will be restricted to name, age and gender. Only the researcher will have access to these codes which will be stored on a secure data base that is password protected. Any data collected and held will be stored on the OU Hulse site.

In writing up the findings of the project the researcher will anonymise participant's identities to the best of his ability, however it is noted (and will be pointed out to participants) that the nature of their position may make complete anonymity difficult in some cases. Also it is noted that some may explicitly wish to be quoted or referred to by name in acting as representatives or spokespeople for their group, institution or association. It is felt that this is acceptable if it is their wish, however where there is a risk that information shared may identify an individual the researcher will ensure that permission is received from the participant prior to doing so.

Data connected to any participant who decides to withdraw their consent will also be destroyed (as soon as possible following withdrawal) as detailed on the research information sheet.

### **Recompense to participants**

Normally, recompense is only given for expenses and inconvenience, otherwise it might be seen as coercion/inducement to participate. Give details of any recompense to participants.

Payment for the use of translation services may have to be made. Also travel expenses and refreshments will be provided for those agreeing to participate in focus group interviews.

### **Deception**

Give details of the withholding of any information from participants, or misrepresentation or other deception that is an integral part of the research. Any such deception should be fully justified.

None anticipated

### **Risks**

Detail any foreseen risks to participants or researchers and steps that will be taken to minimise/counter these.

Given the focus of the project on schools and the provision for young people it is anticipated that many of the participants will be children and young people aged 14-19 and so their vulnerability necessitates a full CRB check. The researcher currently holds a CRB

check conducted two years ago and so remains valid for one year (a copy of this is available if required), however this will need to be updated as a priority. It is also worth mentioning here that as a result of extra-curricular interests the researcher is a qualified Child Protection Officer and is therefore aware of the relevant ethical considerations.

In the interest of minimising the risk of significant disclosure during interviews the researcher will ensure that he stops any interview where he deems any significant disclosure that may breach the interviews' limits of confidentiality is likely to or has taken place and inform the participant of the guidelines for dealing with significant disclosures.

#### **Debriefing**


Give details of how information will be given to participants after data collection to inform them of the purpose of their participation and the research more broadly.

Due to the multi-disciplinary nature of the project its dissemination will take a number of forms. At the end of the first year an interim report will be produced for Milton Keynes Council on the findings of the review of literature on community and cohesion policy. At the end of the second year a more detailed interim report will be delivered along with a one day workshop seminar with the Open University and key figures at Milton Keynes Council, notably the MK Cohesion Board. It is envisaged that participants will attend the one day workshop seminar to discuss the findings in a question and answer session and discussion. At the end of the third year a final report will be produced with analysis and recommendations for MK Council, along with conference presentations, journal articles and the PhD thesis itself.

#### **Declaration**

Declare here that the research will conform to the above protocol and that any significant changes or new issues will be raised with the HPMEC before they are implemented. A Final Report form will need to be filled in once the research has ended.

Signature(s)



(this can be the typed name(s) of investigator(s) if electronic copy is submitted (which is preferred))

Date

16th June 2008

Proposed date for  
final report

---



# References

---

- Allen, J., Massey, D. and Cochrane, A. (1998) *Rethinking the Region*. London: Routledge.
- Allen, J. (2003) 'A question of language', in Pryke, M., Rose, G. and Whatmore, S. (eds.) *Understanding Social Theory: Thinking through Research*. London: Sage.
- Amin, A. (2002) 'Ethnicity and the multicultural city: living with diversity', *Environment and Planning A*, 34, pp. 959-980.
- Amin, A. (2003) 'Unruly strangers? The 2001 urban riots in Britain', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27, 2, pp. 460-463.
- Amin, A. and Graham, S. (1997) 'The ordinary city', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 22, pp. 411-429.
- Amin, A. and Thrift, N. (2002) *Cities: Reimagining The Urban*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- AMMA (1983) *Our Multi-Cultural Society: The Educational Response*. London: Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association.
- Back, L., (1988) 'Coughing up fire: soundsystems in South-East London'. *New Formations*, (Number 5), pp. 141-153.
- Back, L. (1996) *New Ethnicities and Urban Culture: Racisms and Multiculture in Young Lives*. London: UCL Press.
- Ball, W. and Solomos, J. (Eds) (1990) *Race and Local Politics*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education.
- Barker, P. (2009) *The Freedoms of Suburbia*. London: Frances Lincoln.
- Ben-Tovim, G., Gabriel, J., Law, I., Stredder, K. (1986) *The Local Politics of Race*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd.
- Ben-Tovim, G. (1988) 'Race, politics and urban regeneration: lessons from Liverpool', in Parkinson, M; Foley, B and Judd, D, (eds.) (1988) *Regenerating the Cities: The UK Crisis and the US Experience*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 141-155.
- Brah, A. (1996) *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge.
- b:RAP (2004) *Community Cohesion: The Emperor's New Clothes?* Birmingham: b:RAP.
- Cantle, T. (2001) *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team*. London: Home Office.

- Cantle, T. (2004) *The End of Parallel Lives? Report of the Community Cohesion Panel*. London: Home Office.
- Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1982) *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*. London: Hutchinson in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.
- Chakrabarti, N. and Garland, J. (2004) (Eds) *Rural Racism*. Cullumpton: Willan Publishing.
- Charlesworth, J. and Cochrane, A. (1997) Anglicising the American dream: tragedy farce and the 'postmodern' city, in Westwood, S. and Williams, J. (eds.) *Imagining Cities. Scripts, Signs, Memory*. London: Routledge.
- Cheong et al. (2007) 'Immigration, social cohesion and social capital: A critical review', *Critical Social Policy*, 27, 1, pp. 24-49.
- Clapson, M. (2004) *A Social History of Milton Keynes: Middle England/Edge City*. London: Batsford.
- Clarke, T. (2001) Burnley Speaks, Who Listens? A Summary of the Burnley Task Force Report on the disturbances in June 2001. Accessed: <http://resources.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/Publications/Documents/Document/DownloadDocumentsFile.aspx?recordId=95&file=PDFversion>.
- Clayton, J. (2009) 'Thinking spatially: towards an everyday understanding of inter ethnic relations', *Social & Cultural Geography*, 10, 4, pp. 481-498.
- Cochrane, A. (2004) Modernisation, managerialism and the culture wars: the reshaping of the local welfare state in England, *Local Government Studies*, 30, 4, pp. 481-496.
- Cochrane, A. (2007) *Understanding Urban Policy: A Critical Approach*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Cochrane, A. (2008) *Understanding Poverty in Milton Keynes*. Report prepared for Milton Keynes Council.
- Cochrane, A. and Newman, J. (2009) 'Community and policymaking' in Mooney and S. Neal (Eds) *Community: Welfare, Crime and Society*. Maidenhead: McGraw Hill.
- Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) *Our Shared Future*. Wetherby: Commission on Integration and Cohesion.
- Connolly, P. and Troyna, B. (1998) *Researching racism in education: Politics, Theory and Practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Cresswell, T. (2004) *Place: A short introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Daniel, W. (1968) *Racial Discrimination in Britain*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

- Denham, J. (2001) *Building Cohesive Communities: A Report of the Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion*. London: Home Office.
- DCLG (2006) *Strong and Prosperous Communities. The Local Government White Paper*. Norwich: TSO.
- DCLG (2007) *Preventing Violent Extremism - Winning hearts and minds*. London: Department for Communities and Local Government.
- DCLG (2008) *Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power*. Norwich: TSO.
- Dwyer, C. and Bressey, C. (Eds) (2008) *New Geographies of Race and Racism*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- EMASS (n.d.) *Strategies for the Creation of a Multicultural Ethos: Guidance for Head teachers, Teachers and Governors*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council.
- EMASS (n.d.) *Toolkit for Preparing Race Equality Policy for Schools*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council. Accessed:  
[http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/emass/documents/Toolkit\\_for\\_Preparing\\_a\\_Race\\_Equality\\_Policy\\_for\\_Schools.doc.pdf](http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/emass/documents/Toolkit_for_Preparing_a_Race_Equality_Policy_for_Schools.doc.pdf).
- EMASS (2007) *Equality and Diversity in Milton Keynes (Updated 2011)*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council. Accessed:  
[http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/emass/documents/Full\\_Document\\_Merged\\_updated\\_4.2.11\\_.pdf](http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/emass/documents/Full_Document_Merged_updated_4.2.11_.pdf).
- EMASS (2010a) *Guidance for dealing with Racist Incidents in Schools*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council. Accessed:  
[http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/emass/documents/Racist\\_Incidents\\_doc\\_April\\_10.pdf](http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/emass/documents/Racist_Incidents_doc_April_10.pdf).
- EMASS (2010b) *Guidance for the Assessment of Newly Arrived Pupils Key Stage 1 & 2*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council. Accessed:  
[http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/emass/documents/PDF\\_SANDRA.pdf](http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/emass/documents/PDF_SANDRA.pdf).
- EMASS (2010c) *Guidance for the Assessment of Newly Arrived Pupils Key Stage 3 & 4*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council. Accessed:  
[http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/emass/documents/Secondary\\_Amend\\_4.3.09.doc](http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/emass/documents/Secondary_Amend_4.3.09.doc).
- Fairclough, N. (2000) *New Labour, New Language?* London: Routledge.
- Fine, B. (2001) *Social Capital Versus Social Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Fielding, N. and Thomas, H. (2001) 'Qualitative Interviewing', in Gilbert, N. (2001) *Researching Social Life 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, London: Sage, pp. 123-145.
- Finney, N. and Simpson, L (2009) *'Sleepwalking to segregation? Challenging Myths about Race and Migration'*. Bristol: Policy Press.

- Fortier, A. (2008) *Multicultural Horizons: Diversity and the limits of the civil nation*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Fryer, P. (1984) *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*. London: Pluto Press Ltd.
- Gilroy, P. (1987) *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*. London: Heinemann.
- Gilroy, P. (2004a) *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* Abingdon: Routledge.
- Gilroy, P. (2004b) *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race*, Harmondsworth: Allen Lane.
- Gilroy, P. (2005) Melancholia or conviviality: the politics of belonging in Britain, *Soundings*, 29 (Spring), pp. 35-46.
- Gilroy, P. and D. Goldberg, 'A Transatlantic Dialogue with David Goldberg (Humanities Research Institute, University of California) and Paul Gilroy (Sociology, London School of Economics) - 29th June 2007 at Manchester University', <http://www.darkmatter101.org/site/2007/10/02/contemporary-racisms-david-theo-goldberg-and-paul-gilroy/>, Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> February 2008.
- Glick Schiller, N., Çağlar, A. and Guldbrandsen, T. (2006) Beyond the ethnic lens: locality, globality, and born-again incorporation, *American Ethnologist*, 33, 4, pp. 612-633.
- Glick Schiller, N. and Çağlar, A. (2009) Towards a comparative theory of locality in migration studies: migrant incorporation and city scale, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35, 2, pp. 177-202.
- Government Office South East (GOSE) <http://www.go-se.gov.uk/gose/peopleSusComms/communityCohesion/calp/>, accessed 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007.
- Gunaratnam, Y (2003) *Researching 'Race' and Ethnicity: Methods, Knowledge and Power*. London: Sage.
- Hall, S.; Critcher, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J., Roberts, B. (1978) *Policing the crisis: Mugging, The State and Law and Order*. London: Macmillan.
- Hammersley, M. (2008) 'Troubles with triangulation', in Bergman, Manfred Max (Ed) *Advances in Mixed Methods Research*, London, Sage, pp. 22-36 [online] (<http://oro.open.ac.uk/20474/>; accessed 29/06/11).
- Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (1995) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London: Routledge.

- Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (2007) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Harper, D. 'Small N's and community case studies', in Ragin, C. and Becker, H. (Eds) (1992) *What is a case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Henderson, J. and Karn, V. (1984) Race, Class and the Allocation of Public Housing in Britain, *Urban Studies*, Volume 21, pp. 115-128.
- Henry, L. and Mohan, G. (2003) Making homes: the Ghanaian diaspora, institutions and development, *Journal of International Development*, 15, 5, pp. 611-622.
- Herbert, I. (2007) 'Leicester to be first city where white people are minority', The Independent, Tuesday, 11 September 2007. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/leicester-to-be-first-city-where-white-people-are-minority-401968.html>.
- Higgins, J., Deaking, N., Edwards, J., and Wicks, M. (1983) *Government and Urban Poverty. Inside the Policy-Making Process*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Home Office (1968) *Urban Programme Circular No. 1*. London: Home Office.
- House of Commons (2010) *Communities and Local Government Committee: Preventing Violent Extremism – Sixth Report of Session 2009-10*. House of Commons London: The Stationery Office Limited.
- Institute of Public Policy Research (2008) 'Prime Minister speaks on managed migration and earned citizenship', 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008, <http://www.ippr.org/events/?id=3015>, Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> February 2008.
- Jahn-Kahn, M. (2003) The right to riot? *Community Development Journal*, 38, 1, pp. 32-42.
- Kundnani, A. (2001) From Oldham to Bradford: the violence of the violated, *Race and Class*, 43, 2, pp. 105-131.
- Kundani, A. (2002) The death of multiculturalism, *Race and Class*, 43, 4, pp. 67-72.
- Kundani, A. (2009) *Spooked! How not to prevent violent extremism*. London: Institute of Race Relations. Accessed via: <http://www.irr.org.uk/spooked>.
- Kymlicka, W. (1995) *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Lawless, P. (2004) Locating and explaining area-based urban initiatives: New Deal for Communities in England, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 22, pp. 383-399.

- Leigh, A.K. and Putnam, R.D. (2002) 'Reviving community: what policy-makers can do to build social capital in Britain and America', *Renewal*, 10, 2, pp. 15-20.
- Letki, N. (2007) 'Does Diversity Erode Social Cohesion? Social Capital and Race in British Neighbourhoods', *Political Studies*, Volume 56, Number 1, March 2008, pp. 99-126.
- Liverpool Black Caucus (1986). *The Racial Politics of Militant in Liverpool*, Runnymede Trust. Available at:  
[http://openlibrary.org/b/OL11364144M/The\\_Racial\\_Politics\\_of\\_Militant\\_in\\_Liverpool](http://openlibrary.org/b/OL11364144M/The_Racial_Politics_of_Militant_in_Liverpool) [Accessed January 11, 2010].
- Lofland, J. and Lofland, L. (1994) *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.
- McGhee, D. (2003) 'Moving to 'our' common ground – a critical examination of community cohesion discourse in twenty-first century Britain', *The Sociological Review*, Volume 51, Number 3, August 2003, pp. 376-404(29).
- Mac an Ghaill, M. (1988) *Young, Gifted and Black: Student-Teacher Relations in the Schooling of Black Youth*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Macdonald, Lord I. et al. (1989) *Murder in the Playground: The Burnage Report*. London: Longsight Press.
- MacPherson Report (1999) *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*. Report of an Inquiry by Sir William MacPherson of Cluny. Cmnd 4262-I. London: The Stationery Office.
- Massey, D. (1991) 'A Global Sense of Place'. *Marxism Today*, pp. 24-29.
- May, T. (1997) *Social Research: Issues, methods and process*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- McLaughlin, E. and Neal, S. (2004) 'Misrepresenting the multicultural nation: the policy process, news media management and the Parekh Report', *Policy Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 155-174.
- Milton Keynes Citizen (2007a) Housing claims a myth says council, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2004, <http://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/news/Housing-claims-a-myth-says.826821.jp>, Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007.
- Milton Keynes Citizen (2007b) Special support for homeless Somalis, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2006, <http://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/news/Special-support-for-homeless-Somalis.1679198.jp>, Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007.
- Milton Keynes Council (2003) *Census Data on Equalities*, [www.mkweb.co.uk/statistics](http://www.mkweb.co.uk/statistics). Accessed 16 February 2007.
- Milton Keynes Council (2005) *Milton Keynes Council Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council. Accessed:

- [http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/housing-strategy/documents/BME\\_Housing\\_and\\_Social\\_Care\\_Strategy\\_\(adopted\\_by\\_Cabinet\\_06\\_02\\_07\).pdf](http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/housing-strategy/documents/BME_Housing_and_Social_Care_Strategy_(adopted_by_Cabinet_06_02_07).pdf).
- Milton Keynes Council (2007a) *BME Housing and Social Care Strategy 2007-2010*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council. Accessed: [http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/housing-strategy/documents/BME\\_Housing\\_and\\_Social\\_Care\\_Strategy\\_\(adopted\\_by\\_Cabinet\\_06\\_02\\_07\).pdf](http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/housing-strategy/documents/BME_Housing_and_Social_Care_Strategy_(adopted_by_Cabinet_06_02_07).pdf).
- Milton Keynes Council (2007b) *MK Story of Place*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council. Accessed: [http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/partnership-working/documents/131207\\_MK\\_Story\\_of\\_Place\\_061207.doc](http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/partnership-working/documents/131207_MK_Story_of_Place_061207.doc).
- Milton Keynes Council (2008a) *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Strategy*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council. Accessed: [http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/equalities/documents/Cohesion\\_Strategy\\_2009-2011.pdf](http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/equalities/documents/Cohesion_Strategy_2009-2011.pdf).
- Milton Keynes Council (2008b) *Prevent Funding 2009-2011: Information for Applicants*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council.
- Milton Keynes Council (2009) *Milton Keynes Community Cohesion Plan 2009-2012*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council. Accessed: [http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/mkcconsultation/documents/Community\\_Cohesion\\_Plan\\_consultation.doc](http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/mkcconsultation/documents/Community_Cohesion_Plan_consultation.doc).
- Milton Keynes Council (2010) *Milton Keynes. Ethnicity of School Age People Spring 2010*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council.
- Milton Keynes Council (2011) *Milton Keynes Annual School Census 2011*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council.
- Milton Keynes Local Strategic Partnership (2008) *Milton Keynes Sustainable Community Strategy. Our Handbook for Change 2004-2034 (Refreshed June 2008). The City that Thinks Differently Embraces Evolution and Champions Change*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council.
- MK News (2011) 'MK - 'The worst place for public transport''. Published: 14/09/2010 12:40 (Updated: 15/09/2010 10:07). Available at: <http://www.mk-news.co.uk/News/MK-The-worst-place-for-public-transport.htm>.
- Modood, T. et al (1997) *Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Diversity and Disadvantage - Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities*. London: Policy Studies Institute.
- Modood, T. (2005) 'Remaking multiculturalism after 7/7, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2005, openDemocracy, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/node/2879/print>, Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

- Modood, T. Triandafyllidou, A. Zapata Barrero R. (2006) *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship: A European Approach*, London: Routledge.
- Modood, T. (2007a) *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Modood, T. (2007b) 'Multiculturalism, citizenship and national identity', 16<sup>th</sup> May 2007, openDemocracy, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/node/4627/print>, Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007.
- Modood, T. (2007c) 'Multiculturalism's civic future: a response', 20<sup>th</sup> June 2007, openDemocracy, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/node/33146/print>, Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007.
- Mohan, G. (2006) 'Embedded cosmopolitanism and the politics of obligation: The Ghanaian diaspora and development', *Environment and Planning A.*, 38, 5, pp. 867-883.
- Mohan, G. and Mohan, J. (2002) Placing Social Capital, *Progress in Human Geography*, 26, 2, pp. 191-210.
- Mooney, G. and Neal, S. (eds.) (2009) *Community: Welfare, Crime and Society*. Maidenhead: McGraw Hill.
- Mooney, G. and Neal, G. (2009) 'Community: themes and debates' in Mooney and S. Neal (Eds) *Community: Welfare, Crime and Society*. Maidenhead: McGraw Hill.
- Morgan, D.L. (1988) *Focus groups as qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Neal, S. (2002) Rural landscapes, representations and racism: examining multicultural citizenship and policy-making in the English countryside, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25, 3, pp. 442-461.
- Neal, S. and Agyeman, J. (eds.) (2006) *The New Countryside? Ethnicity, Nation and Exclusion in Contemporary Rural Britain*. Bristol: The Policy Press
- Neal, S. and Walters, S. (2006) Strangers asking strange questions? Methodological narrative on researching belonging and identity in the English countryside', *Journal of Rural Studies* 22, 2, pp. 177-89.
- ODPM (2003) *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future*. London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- ONS (2001) Dataset: MK: Settlements - Religion (KS07), Census 2001. Accessed via MKi Observatory ([www.mkiobservatory.org.uk](http://www.mkiobservatory.org.uk)).
- ONS (2007) Dataset: Nations, Regions & Districts - Mid-Year Population Estimates by Ethnic Group (2007). Accessed via Mki Observatory ([www.mkiobservatory.org.uk](http://www.mkiobservatory.org.uk)).



- Ouseley, H. (2001) *Community Pride not Prejudice. Making Diversity Work in Bradford*. Presented to Bradford Vision by Sir Herman Ouseley.  
<http://www.bradford2020.com/pride/report.html>.
- Parekh, B. (2000a) *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Parekh, B. (2000b) *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain Report*. London: Profile Books.
- Phillips, D. (2006) Parallel lives? Changing discourses of British Muslim self-segregation, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 24, pp. 25-30.
- Phillips, T. (2005) Britain 'sleepwalking to segregation' speech cited in. *The Guardian*, 19 September 2005. Accessed:  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/sep/19/race.socialexclusion?INTCMP=SRCH>
- Pryce, K. (1979) *Endless Pressure: A Study of West Indian Life-styles in Bristol*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Putnam, R.D. (1993a) *Making democracy work: civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Putnam, R.D. (1993b) The prosperous community: social capital and public life. *The American Prospect* 13, pp. 35-42.
- Putnam, R.D. (1995a) Tuning in, tuning out: the strange disappearance of social capital in America. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 28, pp. 667 - 83.
- Putnam, R.D. (1995b) Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy* 6(1), pp. 65-78.
- Putnam, R.D. (2000) *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Putnam, R.D. (2003) *Better Together: Restoring the American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Ragin, C. (1992) "'Casing" and the process of social inquiry', in Ragin, C. and Becker, H. (Eds) (1992) *What is a case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ragin, C. and Becker, H. (Eds) (1992) *What is a case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ray, L. and Reed, K. (2005) Community, mobility and racism in a semi-rural area: comparing minority experience in Kent. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28, 2, pp. 212-234.

- Reeve, K. and Robinson, D. (2007) Minority ethnic housing experiences in small town England, *Housing Studies*, 22, 4, pp. 547-571.
- Rex, J. and Moore, R., (1967) *Race, Community and Conflict: a Study of Sparkbrook*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Rex, J. and Tomlinson, S. (1979) *Colonial Immigrants in a British City*. London: Routledge.
- Rhodes, R. (1997) *Understanding Governance. Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Ritchie, D. (2001) *Oldham Independent Review: One Oldham One Future, Panel Report 11 December 2001*. Accessed: <http://resources.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/Publications/Documents/Document/DownloadDocumentsFile.aspx?recordId=97&file=PDFversion>.
- Rose, N. (1999) *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sarre, P., Phillips, D. and Skellington, D. (1989) *Ethnic Minority Housing: Explanations and Policies*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Scarman, Lord J. (1981), *The Brixton Disorders, 10–12th April 1981*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Sivanandan, A. (1982) *A different hunger: writings on Black resistance*. London: Pluto Press.
- Smith, D. (1977) *Racial Disadvantage in Britain*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Solomos, J. and Back, L. (1995) *Race, Politics, and Social Change*. London: Routledge.
- Spivak, G. (1988) *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. London: Routledge.
- Sporton, D., Valentine, G., Nielsen, K.B. (2006): Post-Conflict Identities: Practices and Affiliations of Somali Asylum Seeker Children, *Children's Geographies*, 4, 2, pp. 203-217.
- Sporton, D. and Valentine, G. (2007) Identities on the move: the integration of Somali asylum seeker and refugee young people, Unpublished project briefing notes: *ESRC Identities and Social Action Programme*.
- Stoker, G. (2004) *Transforming Local Governance: from Thatcherism to New Labour*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Street Dreams (2006) Round Ere, OO Cares? A Project for Bletchley Task Force Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. High Wycombe: Street Dreams.

- Swann (1985) *Education For All: Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Taylor, S. (2002) *Ethnographic Research: A Reader*, London: Sage.
- Travis, A. (2010) Ministers dismantle £60m programme to prevent violent extremism. *The Guardian*, 13 July. Accessed: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/jul/13/ministers-dismantle-programme-prevent-violent-extremism>.
- Troyna, B. and Williams, J. (1986) *Racism, education and the state: the radicalisation of education policy*. London: Croom Helm.
- Vaughan, D. (1992) 'Theory elaboration: the heuristics of case analysis', in Ragin, C. and Becker, H. (Eds) (1992) *What is a case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vertovec, S. (2006) The Emergence of Super-Diversity in Britain, Working Paper No. 25, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford, <http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/files/pdfs/Steven%20Vertovec%20WP0625.pdf>.
- Vertovec, S. (2007) 'Super-diversity and its implications', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 30, Number 6, pp. 1024-1054.
- Voloder, L. (2008) Autoethnographic Challenges: Confronting Self, Field and Home, *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 19: 1, pp. 27-40.
- Webber, C. and Swinney, P. (2010) *Private Sector Cities: a New Geography of Opportunity*. London: Centre for Cities. <http://centreforcities.org/assets/files/10-06-07%20Private%20Sector%20Cities%20web.pdf>.
- Wrench, J., et al. (1993) *Invisible Minorities: racism in new towns and new contexts*. Coventry, Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick.
- Young, I. (1990) *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.